Picturing Everyday Life:

Politics and Aesthetics of *Saenghwal* in Postwar South Korea, 1953-1959

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ABSTRACT

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Following the collapse of the Japanese Empire (1945) and the devastation of the Korean War (1950-1953), the question of how to represent and imagine "everyday life" or "way of life" (*saenghwal*, 生活) became a focal point of post-colonial and Cold War contestations. For example, President Syngman Rhee's administration attempted to control the discourse of "New Life" (*shinsaenghwal*) by linking the spatio-temporality of the everyday to reconstruction and modernization. "Everyday life" was also a concept of strategic interest to the United States, whose postwar hegemonic ambitions in East Asia meant spreading "the truth" about an idealized vision of American way of life through government agencies such as the United States Information Service (USIS). These ideas and representations were designed to interpellate the South Korean people into a particular kind of regulatory relationship with their bodies and minds, their conduct of their day-to-day lives, their vision of themselves within the nation and the "Free World." "Everyday life" became, in other words, part-and-parcel of Cold War governmentality's mechanism of subjectification.

Overly privileging these top-down discourses and techniques, however, can foreclose a nuanced understanding of a rich and complex set of negotiations over the meaning of *saenghwal* underway in both elite intellectual and popular imagination. Through my examination of literature, criticism, reportage, human-interest stories, government bulletins, philosophical essays, photography (artistic, popular, journalistic, archival, exhibition), cartoons, and educational and

feature films, I characterize this period broadly in terms of "postwar crisis of modernity." If "colonial modernity" in Korea had consisted of tensions and collaborations between colonialism, enlightenment, and modernization, then the emergent neocolonial order of the Cold War would give rise to a reconfiguration of this problematic: national division, South Korea's semi-sovereignty vis-à-vis the U.S. and the denial of decolonization accompanied by the false promise of democratic freedom and American-style prosperity. Negotiations of this crisis can be found across urban and rural space, contesting the representation and dissemination of universalist and developmentalist "everyday life," which was linked to the postwar restoration of the enlightenment subject. The stakes of these contestations through the framework of *saenghwal* could be ontological, aesthetic, economic, affective or universalist, and were articulated across popular and intellectual registers.

While works of recent English-language scholarship in modern Korean history have productively explored the question of everyday life during the colonial period and in DPRK after liberation, no work thus far has examined the significance of the relationship between intermediality and *saenghwal* in the cultural field of ROK in the postwar 1950s. In addition to building on the current trend of scholarship that emphasizes the continuity between colonial and post-colonial cultural formations, my analysis of literature opens up future avenues of research for those interested in understanding literature's intersection with modes of reportage, photography, and mass visuality. The chapter on the countryside draws from a diverse array of cultural productions to analyze a space that has traditionally been discussed within the limited geopolitical context of U.S. aid and development; no scholar to my knowledge has undertaken medium-specific inquiry to think through ontological and aesthetic negotiations unfolding in the countryside. My chapter on film culture reads the postwar debates around plagiarism/imitation,

melodrama/*sinp'a*, and realism/neorealism through the gendering discourse of "everyday feelings" (*saenghwal kamjŏng*), and analyzes understudied films of the era with particular attention paid to their exploration of postwar sentiment. Finally, the last chapter intervenes on the wealth of existing scholarship on *The Family of Man* in visual studies by situating it within a broader formation of the postwar enlightenment subject as a democratic modernizing ideal. By focusing on the affective premise of this ideal, I contribute to the existing scholarship on theories of everyday life, sovereignty, and Cold War culture, which have tended to neglect the role of intermediation and affective interpellation in the governmentality of everyday life.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my most profound appreciation to my advisor Professor Ted Hughes. We met in 2007 when I first became interested in Korean literature, at the time, mostly from the perspective of a translator. Despite his busy schedule, he generously took the time to offer guidance to this curious, overzealous interloper. It was the experience of auditing his lecture on Korean literature and film that re-invigorated my scholarly aspirations. It is sometimes said that writers or thinkers are often blind to what most deeply influences their work. To have this manuscript regarded as bearing a unique imprint of his teaching and scholarship would be, to my mind, the highest of honors.

I feel blessed to have had the opportunity and privilege to study and work with the other dissertation committee members—Professors Tomi Suzuki, Charles Armstrong, Lydia Liu, and Ying Qian—over the years in varying capacities. During my time at Columbia, I was enriched by Professor Suzuki's vast knowledge of modern Japanese literature (not to mention her spirited scholarly rigor), Professor Armstrong's eloquent insight on U.S. empire and neo-colonialism in Asia, Professor Liu's provocative theorization of the role that technology and media formations play on modern cultural productions, and Professor Qian's exciting new work which blends analysis of cultures of cinema and photography.

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After returning from my research trip in Seoul, I had the pleasure of leading EALAC's Korean Studies Group. Members included masters and doctoral students in Korean literature, Korean history, Asian art history, and French literature. Biweekly discussions on literary,

historical, and theoretical issues concerning Korea-related scholarship (fueled by Center for Korean Research-funded pizza and wine) helped me stay out of the weeds, so to speak, allowing me to see my dissertation through fresh and interesting perspectives. I want to thank Eunsung Cho, Peter Graham Moody, Thomas Michael Ryan, Jeewon Monica Kim, Dohee Kang, Monica Cho, Sulim Kim, Iris Kim, and Joo Kyung Lee for making my final year at Columbia such a memorable one.

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While the path to eventually beginning my doctoral studies did at times feel like a meandering one, there were many teachers and friends along the way who helped me arrive at this destination. I believe, furthermore, my circuitous route has only enriched the manuscript in its present form. At Macalester College, Professor Roy Kay was the first person who taught me about close reading and metafiction, and Professor Gerald Weiss, through his seminar on History of Psychology, gave me an early taste of what a methodologically critical form of

interdisciplinarity might look like. At Swarthmore College, Professors Tamsin Lorraine and Richard Eldridge introduced ways of synthesizing literary and philosophical categories. Without Brother Anthony of Taize's early support of my literary translation efforts, I would have had neither the courage nor the resources to move to Seoul in 2007 to learn about contemporary Korean literature, substantially improve my Korean, and reacquaint myself with the city where I was born. While in Seoul, it was my conversations with NYU's Professor Monica Kim (then a doctoral candidate from University of Michigan) that inspired me to think critically and politically about Korean-American identity, Korea-U.S. relations, and the limits and refuge of literature.

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DEDICATION

For my mother and father,

Il Young Kim (金一英) *and Jung Woong Chung* (鄭楨雄)*,*

without whom not

INTRODUCTION

Everyday Life and Intermediality: Theorizing the Cultural Field of Postwar South Korea

> "The atmosphere [of depravity and decadence] is no accident; it too is a *fin-de-siècle* tendency, along with political corruption, economic confusion, the impoverishment of the nation's masses, which means ordinary citizens cannot find room for hope or ideals in their society. This can be observed in various aspects of everyday life (*saenghwal*). One example might be the fact that literary readers today subsist on vulgar eroticism…recently, there have been more and more newspaper articles on suicide. What appears before the readers' eyes is a broader trend of darkness in our society. Is this, then, South Korea's social reality?"
>
> —Critic Paek Ch'ŏl from the segment "This is How We Objectify Reality" in *Shint'aeyang* (1957)[1]

In July of 1953, the same month the Korean War Armistice agreement was signed ensuring "a complete cessation of hostilities of all acts of armed force in Korea,"[2] *Sudop'yŏngnon* published Pak Yonggu's "Blue Shades," a short dystopic satire about a series of corrupt and misguided attempts by the political leaders of "City A" to combat what they understand to be visual excesses of consumer culture. A year later, Kang Soch'ŏn published his classic children's story "Dreamcatcher Photo Studio" in which a young man discovers a magical studio that can photographically capture a person's dreams. Pak and Kang's fictional works, while utterly different in style, intended readership, and worldview, serve as emblematic parables for introducing emergent forms of everyday life and intermediality specific to the post-Korean War 1950s in South Korea, which constitute the primary subject of this introduction and the scope of subsequent chapters of the dissertation more broadly. After a close reading of these two stories, I will trace the discursive history of "everyday life" (*saenghwal,* 生活) in Korea from the

[1] Paek Ch'ŏl, "Kasangsogesŏdo mirarŭn charanda" [a seed of grain can sprout even in the illusory realm], *Shint'aeyang*, January 1957, 49.
[2] U.S. Department of State Archive, "Text of the Korean War Armistice Agreement." Accessed May 20, 2017. https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/ac/rls/or/2004/31006.htm

Japanese colonial period to the postwar, emphasizing, along the way, the significance of intermediality as an indispensible framework for understanding the representation of everyday life at this historical conjuncture.

"Blue Shades"[3] begins with a municipal meeting where Assemblyman B of the "fatso faction" reports that there is something "abnormal" about people's faces. He casts blame on the "colorful array of cakes [and other food items] displayed in shop windows" and proposes measures to restrict the "squeezing out of useless saliva and sweat" by restricting the use of window displays and ordering the installation of proper curtains to shield the shop interiors from being visible from the streets. Assemblyman C of the "scrawny faction" opposes the measure, claiming the closed curtains will raise the temperature of the shops, cause the food to spoil, thereby hurting the municipal economy. Each political position is linked neatly with a specific business interest. When the mayor's nephew is assaulted in a random act of violence on the street, regulatory measures are strengthened; the reasoning given is that the assailant was provoked to violence by "resplendent clothing." While bright-colored clothes have already been removed from display, more drastic measures are called for. Perhaps all citizens must be forbidden from wearing such colorful clothing in public. But such a measure, one assemblyman righteously claims, would erase the distinction between the city leaders and ordinary people, and society would descend into chaos. Finally, a solution is offered which satisfies both political and business interests: all citizens will be required to wear "blue shades" to protect them from improper stimulus by these bright, resplendent colors. When the citizens who are too poor to purchase these sunglasses embark on a wave of migration to City H, the mayor of City A has no choice but to deploy the police force to shoot on sight any of the "treacherous citizenry" who dare cross the city limit.

[3] Pak Yonggu, "Ch'ŏngsaek Ang'yŏng" [blue shades], *Sudop'yŏngnon*, July 1953.

Pak's acerbic tale offer several points germane to the main subject of this dissertation: the politics and aesthetics of everyday life in postwar South Korea. First, the work places the visuality of urban streets (*kŏri*) as a central problematic of Foucauldian governmentality.[4] For example, though the regulations are proposed and passed in the municipal government building, Assemblyman B bases his proposal on what he observes from the street (people look "unhealthy" and "abnormal"). Subsequent scenes in municipal meetings occur in reaction to incidents (e.g. the assault of the mayor's nephew) that take place in the streets. And it is in the streets that the mayor posts his "municipal decrees" which are quoted full-text, showing the streets to be the privileged medium of contact between the government and the people. Second, the story lays bare the mechanisms of governmentality and the ways in which the state seeks to manage the life energies of its citizen's through discourses on health, social disorder, sensual excess, and efficiency at the level of everyday life. While these assembly debates unfold under a paternalistic pretense, the story also critiques the ways in which these same debates are motivated by non-public interests, thereby exposing the state's moral claim as responsible guardians of its citizens to be hollow. Third, the strategy of the state actually seeks to minimize the very need for moral discursive intervention by imagining the citizenry as biological organisms whose behavior is largely determined by environmental stimuli; the goal is to intervene on the contact between the advertising image (attractive food and clothes on display) and the eye—i.e. the optical nerve—through legal or regulatory decree. To reiterate the first point, the privileged site of this intervention within the urban context is the streets. The story's absurdist solution, which is to

[4] Majia Holmer Nadesan elucidates Foucault's concept with the following framing questions in the opening page of her book *Governmentality, Biopower, and Everyday Life:* "How are human populations governed in contemporary societies? How is the conduct of everyday life in the family, in the school, and in the workplace shaped by social relations of power? How do individuals engage in self-regulation across social contexts? How are recalcitrant or unruly individuals disciplined? How are the state, the market, and the population constituted and entwined in/through particular arts of government?"

foreclose the possibility of corruption by shielding the eye itself, the "blue shades" serves as a state-issued visual prophylactic, a material signifier for the fear of infection and the fantasy of purity. Finally, I want to draw attention to how in Pak's story, the legal discourse that first and foremost protect political and business interests eventually results in subjecting ordinary people to the brutality and whim of state violence. The law mandating the use of "blue shades" leads to a mass migration to City H, and the refugee population becomes de facto "illegals" who are vulnerable to survivalist conditions of war-time precarity.

Pak's story is remarkable for groping with forms of state power that go beyond the familiar Cold War discourse of anti-communism or post-colonial nationalism. Here, the enemy of the people are neither an occupying foreign power (i.e. United States) nor a duplicitous ideological Other (i.e. North Korea). Rather, the threat of annihilation comes from one's own state in the form of overzealous governmentality; the logics of morality, economic productivity, and sovereignty converge to produce conditions of necropolitical normalcy in which ordinary people are displaced and become subject to potential slaughter.

In contrast to Pak's "Blue Shades" whose principle setting is the city, Kang Soch'ŏn's "Dreamcatcher Photo Studio"[5] (1954) unfolds in a pastoral environment, where a young man goes to a hillside on a spring day with a sketchbook. Rather than producing a sketch, he decides "it was more pleasing to just sit there and gaze" at the beauty of the spring landscape. His gaze eventually falls on a sign, which leads him to another, until he comes upon a Western-style house. The mysterious owner of the studio inside directs him to a room without windows or artificial light which is nonetheless very bright. There, the man is given the following instruction from a book:

[5] Kang Soch'ŏn, *Kkum ŭl tchingnŭn sajin'gwan* (Sŏul-si: Kyohaksa, 2006).

> People these days say we are in the "era of television" to boast about today's civilization. But this television pales in comparison to what my recent experiments can offer […] *After the Korean War, what we want to see more than anything are the faces of those we dearly miss.* There are things we cannot see, and we feel "nostalgia" for these things we can't simply let go of. This allows us think about the past. In order to think about the past, we take out old photo albums and look at the days gone by… Our memories are not perfect, and because of the war, we have lost almost all of our [beautiful nostalgic moments]. But thankfully we have something called "dreams." (emphasis added)

The owner of the studio has devised a very interesting method for recovering the young man's dream. In order to "catch" the dream, the young man must first *write* it, using a "white piece of paper and a fountain pen." After placing the short description in his breast pocket, he dreams of a moment shared with his childhood friend Suni he was separated from after the Korean War. (His family's parents were categorized as landlords by the North Korean government, it is said, and had to relinquish all of their property.) The description of this memory is invested with the kind of sentimental detail common to nostalgic imagery: "The black hills where the apricot flowers have blossomed. I used to play with Suni in the grass basking in the warmth of spring sunshine. Her yellow blouse and sky-blue skirt. Suni who used to hold a wind flower and sing. Will we really meet tonight?"

Kang's story concludes with two twists. The first is that the "dream-catching" photograph captures the man at his present age of twenty while Suni remains twelve, as she is in his memory. While fulfilling the fantasy of re-materializing the past, the incongruity of their gap in age emphasizes nostalgia's inherent solipsism, making him aware that an entirely separate Suni exists, who is all grown up like him, and "probably wouldn't look as good in a yellow blouse and sky-blue skirt." It points to an emptiness at the center of his longing, as well as a sense of loss, that motivates one to visually document the past. There is a limit to what technology can recover (even when that technology has magical powers). The second twist comes when he returns to the hill and learns that the photo which he had kept as a "cherished treasure" has disappeared,

replaced, instead, by a "dandelion card" he uses as a bookmark inside his favorite children's book. This second twist both reneges on the dream studio's magical promise but also offers a kind of consolation prize that is more familiar within our everyday reality. While no visual technology can (yet) capture a dream or fully recover one's lost childhood, a bookmark, which can suspend or hold the temporal progression of a book, allows the reader to revisit a specific part of a book freely. So the final turn is away from the fantasy of an all-seeing visual technology and towards a textual form of absorption.

Their obvious differences aside, both Pak and Kang's narratives help us explore the intermediality of everyday life. By intermediality, I am referring to the "interconnectedness of modern media" and how they depend on and refer to each other explicitly or implicitly.[6] Rather than thinking about literature and film, for example, as distinct genres of narratives and representations, one can understand them as subsisting on continuing flows of ideas, creative energies, and material and human resources across their constitutive boundaries. In the case of Pak's "Blue Shades," this system of mutual reliance may be understood as a flexible, mobile, and shifting media assemblage of governmentality. By this I mean that intermedial networks can be seen as overlapping systems of excitation, regulation, and control, including the ways in which visuality of the commodity form (e.g. advertising, window displays) penetrates and provokes the everyday experiences of city dwellers or the ways in which governmental measures attempt to regulate such forms of visuality (e.g. public proclamations of sumptuary laws, the "blue shades" to protect the citizenry from the titillating splendor of the commodity form). Such a conception of media allows us to appreciate media formations not only as tools of representation and informational dissemination but technological instruments of management, conditioning, or force.

[6] Klaus Bruhn Jensen, "Intermediality," in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Communication,* edited by Wolfgang Donsbach (Malden: Wailey Blackwell, 2015), 279.

In the case of Kang's "Dreamcatcher Photo Studio," our idea of intermedial assemblage is less geared towards the goals of governmentality, and more towards subjectivity, memory, personal sentiment, and temporality. At the beginning of the story, the protagonist's intention is to sit on a hilltop and sketch what he sees, only to have the narrative turn inward into a realm of fantasy and longing: a yearning to recover a lost childhood friend as well as an innocent past prior to national division and war. The turn inward suggests a dissatisfaction about simply gazing outward to depict what he sees. The sketch of the external world is not enough. It is intriguing that even in possession of such a magical technology, the photo studio requires the protagonist's participation, which calls for the protagonist to write down his dream. This dream can be "caught" only through the co-deployment of personally rendered writing and technically-mediated image, but even then, what ends up being revealed is a virtual simulation of that loss, Suni as he left her, as a child: a past suspended, idealized in memory. Affective forms such as wanting, waiting, and longing were commonly portrayed in the postwar period across a range of cultural productions, including photography, human-interest stories, melodramatic films, as well as literary and popular fiction. This was the sentimental dimension of everyday life, pervasive enough to call a "structure of feeling" of the postwar period.

In this way, Pak and Kang's narratives—the former linked to intermedial techniques of governmentality and the latter to nostalgia as intermediated spatio-temporal reconstruction—help us tease out different dimensions of intermediality in everyday life. This brings us to the central methodological contribution of the dissertation, which is thinking through the discourse of everyday life in the postwar 1950s through the framework of intermediality. Irina O. Rajewsky has traced two main tendencies in studies of intermediality—the first sees intermediality as a fundamental condition of media and the second approaches it as a specific feature of media products

and configurations.[7] The dissertation draws from both. While acknowledging that all media is mixed media (as W.J.T. Mitchell has claimed) and that all mediation involves some form of re-mediation, I am attempting to historically situate particular intermedial processes within the postwar moment in South Korea, while paying attention to medium-specific histories of photography, print culture, and cinema. Historically situating intermedial formations at this conjuncture is particularly relevant because the postwar marks an important moment in the neo-colonial embrace of technological mediation, relying on coordinated deployment of audio-visual media to construct enlightenment developmentalist subjects throughout the world. In other words, conditions of intermediality were considered critical for bringing about the neo-colonial revolution of everyday life after the Second World War.

To reiterate, approaching postwar everyday life in South Korea through intermediality is particularly useful because it allows us to think about how intermediality is functioning alongside U.S. hegemony in East Asia and the resurgence of the enlightenment logic as it was claimed by the ideology of modernization theory and developmentalism. *Intermediality as method* within this context can mean tracking forms of subversive or fugitive media excess—looking for ways in which meaning-making and cultural productions exceed the forces of regulation by hegemonic discourses—whether the field in question is primarily political or aesthetic. Seen in this light, "everyday life" can be theorized *neither* completely as forms of existence outside of ideological reaches of techniques of governmentality *nor* as completely interpenetrated by totalizing process of capitalism, but as *continuously constituted and re-constituted intermedially across political and aesthetic practices of production, consumption, and re-deployment, forever shifting and mobile, and never completely held captive by structuring structures of colonialism and capitalism, but also never entirely outside of them either.* Within

[7] Irina O. Rajewsky, "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality," *Intermédialités* 6 (2005): 47-48.

this framework, any one medium's role in representing "everyday life" cannot be fully evaluated without looking at competing and collaborating media forms.

For the remainder of this opening section, I would like to highlight four theoretical frameworks that will be elaborated in greater detail throughout the dissertation's main body. The first is *intermedial reflexivity*. This is somewhat akin to the existing notion of "intermedial reference,"[8] which tends to focus on one mode of representation's introjection of properties of other media. It includes, for example, musicalization of literature. But "intermedial reference" also points to a citational practice (e.g. references to paintings in film). By contrast, the term "intermedial reflexivity," as I have formulated it, emphasizes the ability of intermedial relations to yield alternate modes of spatio-temporal experiences and representations of everyday life. Their function is to *de-familarize* rather than *naturalize* the mobilization of media, as to foreground the unique specificity of the medium. They may function like "intermedial reference" in that they allow one medium to feed off the cultural prestige or the documentary valence of another medium, but the effect is differentiation rather than homogenization—a sense of an uncanny proliferation of incommensurate semiotic systems for mapping the everyday.

By contrast, intermediality was approached differently by agents of developmentalist mobilization, which I am broadly describing as *audio-visual enlightenment*. I point to a certain predilection towards mediaphilic meta-representations: that is, films about making films, or photographs of people looking at photographs. While pedagogic material, lesson plans, and syllabi of UNESCO's Fundamental Education show that trainers of rural leaders were attuned to specific strengths and attributes of each medium, what is ultimately emphasized is the coordinated and harmonized mobilization of every available medium towards the common goal of producing an enlightenment subject. In this sense, the intermedial nodes convey a different

[8] Ibid., 52.

pressure on the subject to conform to a linear temporality, and to adopt homogenizing notions of community and nation and the individual's place within it. *More radically, educational films deployed intermedia as a means of reproducing a social reality as a representation within its own intermedial network*. For example, the slogan "My Hometown and My School, Realized Through The Audio-Visual" is not simply trying to improve a community through audio-visual technology, but to "realize" (to bring into existence) a utopic imaginary through audio-visual technological innervation.

This brings me to my idea of *postwar enlightenment visuality,* which contains contradictions of the postwar enlightenment project—the contradiction of trying to promote freedom and democracy on the one hand, and fulfill the demands of maintaining neo-colonial hegemony on the other. The best example of this form of visuality can be found in meta-photographs archived by USIS (e.g. photographs of South Korean people looking at photographs curated by USIS offices). Over time, we see a certain preferred composition, a preferred intersubjective configuration that emerge. Spectators gather as a crowd but there is a sense of their individuation, estrangement, and pensiveness. The meta-photographer stands at a distance. This physical distance also stands for an epistemic gap—between the overseer and the overseen—and it produces institutional anxieties, which fuel ethnographic and sociological knowledge-production, and this knowledge-base becomes part-and-parcel of the postwar developmentalist episteme. What is interestingly bracketed or marginalized in this formulation of the enlightenment subject is the discourse of affect—of wanting, waiting, separation, isolation, the need for proximity and communion which we find in both literary and popular discourse due to the emotional toll of postwar poverty and dislocation.

Finally, I want to discuss my treatment of Raymond William's often-cited term "structure of feeling" (explored in greater detail in Chapter 4). The term was first coined by Williams to address medium-specific conventions of theater and film, and later adapted to more flexibly capture socio-cultural moods, sensibilities, and ways of feeling that cannot be mapped through strict materialist analysis. I see both Williams's "structure of feeling" and the discourse of "everyday feelings" (*saenghwal kamjŏng*, 生活感情) within the South Korean context as *concurrent* discursive symptoms of postwar massification and alienation, differently inflected by local contingencies. While Williams was interested in renovating vulgar forms of Marxist materialism, those who spoke of "everyday feelings" in Korea were looking for a way to imagine a stabilized, normative emotional existence after the Korean War and to provide a way of discursively pivoting between granular concreteness of daily experiences and communal or ethnonational imaginaries. I see "everyday feelings" as a way of remedying effects of postwar dislocation, alienation, and increasing massification of media, entertainment, and culture, whereby communal affect was becoming increasingly a product of technologies of spectacle. While the modern discourse of "everyday life" has been discussed extensively in Asian Studies, no scholar to my knowledge has discussed "everyday feelings" in any systematic way. I am arguing for its centrality in a more complete understanding of "everyday life" as a discourse of capitalist modernity.

I also want to emphasize that I am employing the terms "politics and aesthetics" in the dissertation's title in the broadest and most inclusive sense. Politics, for example, includes anti-communism, geopolitics, and politics of the female body and everyday sentiment. Aesthetics includes familiar movements and genres of literary and film studies, such as modernism, realism, naturalism, and melodrama. It also points to aesthetics in the older sense of the term as it

emerged in the 17th and 18th century during the European enlightenment—meaning attention to matters of creaturely life, modes of sensorial embodiment that cannot be reduced to ideals of rationality and instrumentality. The dissertation focuses on years 1953-1959 because there is a tendency in both Korean and English-language scholarship on the postwar 1950s to evaluate its significance and shortcomings in light of the two major legacies of later decades under Park Chung-hee rule: export-led developmentalism and populist struggle for democratization. Rather than thinking of the postwar 1950s as a basketcase decade, I understand it as a very rich and fertile period for analysis for the cultural and intellectual historian of modern Korea, a period when the ideological legacies of the Japanese colonial period overlapped with neo-colonial contestations with the United States in the early years of the Cold War.

History of the Discourse of Everyday Life in Korea

In order to fully appreciate the importance of everyday life (*saenghwal*) in the intellectual and cultural history of modern Korea, we need to recognize its discursive embeddedness within the emergent conditions of modernity in East Asia in the early twentieth century. While the idea of transforming everyday life was a central part of U.S.-led developmentalist discourse during the postwar era, the history of the significance of everyday life in Korea was an inextricable part of history of modernity itself and cannot be subsumed by U.S.-centered narratives of modernization and uplift. The very resilience of the term "The New Life Movement" (*shinsaenghwal undong,* 新生活運動) under disparate modern political regimes shows the attractiveness of mobilizing ideology around the idea of re-structuring one's everyday life throughout East Asia. Within the Korean context, the notion of *shinsaenghwal* can be found in the enlightenment movement of the 1910s, the socialist movement of the 1920s, the Japanese

imperialization (*hwangminhwa*, 皇民化) of the late-1930s and 1940s, post-liberation education campaign under the U.S. Military Occupation (1945-1948), the Syngman Rhee administration (1948-1960) [Figure 1], the post-April Revolution student movement during the Second Republic, and of course, Park Chung-hee's developmentalist state of the Third and Fourth Republic.

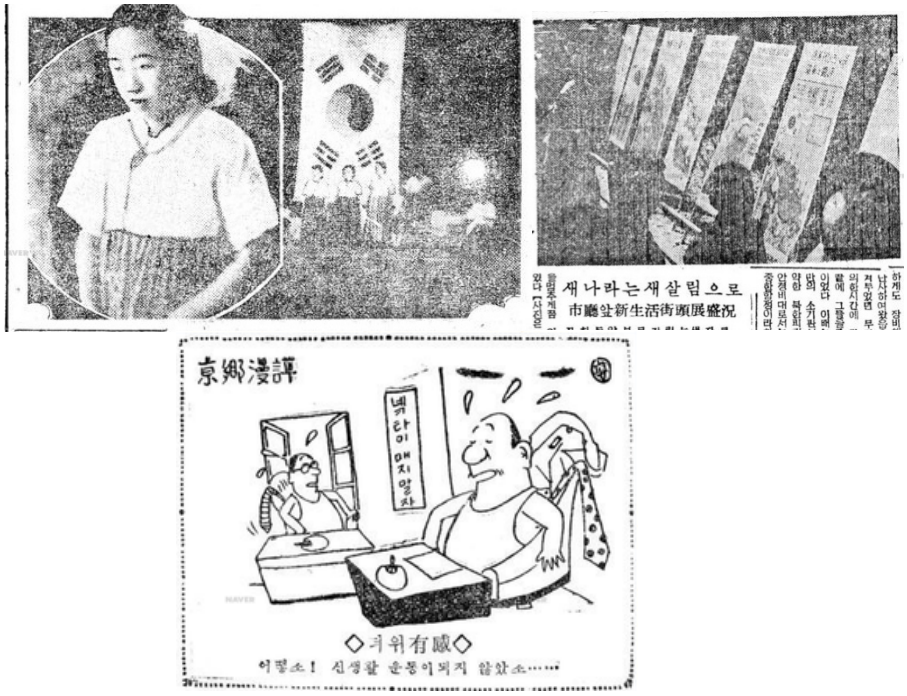

Figure 1. President Syngman Rhee's "The New Life Movement." Fashion shows involved exhibiting inexpensive and practical clothing for women (top left). The poster exhibition by City Hall showcased methods for effectively managing a modern household (top right). The cartoon (below) depicts office workers who responded to the New Life Movement's decree "not to wear neckties" by removing their shirts as well. Such programs attempted to situate the public and private everyday of South Korea within the spatio-temporality of reconstruction and modernization.

While the totalizing tendency of the discourse of *saenghwal* lent itself to becoming appropriated by state-sponsored rhetoric, the idea of *saenghwal* was not intrinsically top-down or statist. As intellectual historian Yi Ch'ŏlho has shown, the terms *saengmyŏng* (生命) and *saenghwal* (生活) were translated concepts of European origins.[9] The process of their indigenization in the early twentieth century passed through mediation by early Japanese

[9]Yi Ch'ŏlho, *Yŏnghonŭi kyebo* [genealogy of the soul], (Sŏul-si: Ch'angbi, 2013), 31.

Romanticism—more specifically, Taisho-era culturalist thought. Novelist, intellectual, and cultural nationalist Yi Kwangsu, for example, was writing in the late-1910s towards a new form of life that was both spiritual *and* material, which Jin-Kyung Lee has described as "affective sovereignty": the ability of a self-responsibilized subject to modulate their emotions to achieve consciousness of and improve their everyday lives.[10] While the 1920s saw the emergence of socialist-internationalist thought in colonial Korea and an understanding of *saenghwal* as ruthlessly determined by the exploitative conditions of capitalism, the idealized revolutionary subject was still, at bottom, an enlightenment subject, whatever ideological or dogmatic cloak this subject happened to be wearing. Whether *saenghwal* was inscribed within the logic of universal history—in Marxist terms, the teleology of proletarian revolution—the stage of action was still conceived of and represented at the level of everyday life: a conception of living as a continuous process of observation, contemplation and self-conscious correction of customs, beliefs, everyday practices. It was not that emotions and sensations were elided from the conversation by an all-consuming valorization of the rational; on the contrary, Yi Kwangsu's "affective sovereign" was able to modulate between intellect (*chi*), emotion (*chŏng)* and will (*ŭi*), just as 1920s KAPF debates on literary discourse often hinged on concerns about how to properly marshal descriptions of the sensory and pent-up emotion to fulfill revolutionary ideals.[11] It was that both visions of enlightenment privileged the human subject's capacity to master and continually refine these aspects of one's emotions, sensibility and intellect.

While the intellectual discourse in colonial Korea tended towards enlightenment ideals, the material reality of the 1920s mass culture trafficked in representational excesses that were decidedly anti-enlightenment: as Miriam Silverberg points out, the discourse of the "erotic,"

[10] Jin-Kyung Lee, "Sovereign Aesthetics: Disciplining Emotion, and Racial Rehabilitation in Colonial Korea, 1910-1922," Acta Koreana 8, no. 1 (July 2005), 77-107.
[11] Ibid., 85-87.

"grotesque," "nonsense," dominated Japanese popular culture of the 1930s, but the origins of its culture of consumerist decadence emerged even earlier, in the years of reconstruction following the Kanto earthquake in 1923: "proliferation of [bars, cafés, tearooms], the rapid growth of street buses and suburban railways…the growth of department stores and modern offices that emerged to take hold of, to recreate, and to create a new cultural practice of everyday order."[12] In a similar vein, Kim Yerim has identified the 1920s in colonial Korea as an era of mass culture, showing how "the expansion of knowledge and cultivation" accompanied the "increasing popularization" of certain "collective sensibilities and tastes"; according to Kim, the image of "the Other," coded in terms of erotic, nonsense and grotesque, was popularized by provoking curiosity and interest, becoming an object of everyday consumption.[13] Kim provides a memorable quote from an article published in the journal *Pyŏlgŏngon*, a publication whose very name frames "a curio" or "a rarity" as an everyday object of spectacular delight:

> The nerves of modern men are getting duller by the day. Because of modern science's endless provocation, their nerves have sharpened to the extreme and by simple reaction, their hearts have become fixated on pointlessly hunting for the bizarre and the eerie. Grotesque! Grotesque! A nude erotic. A mythic grotesque. This is the life-giving water (*saengmyŏngsu*, 生命水) that drags the modern man forward in spite of his limp pulse of life (*myŏngmaek*, 命脈).[14]

The tongue-in-cheek tone aside, what is implied here is the very perversity of the situation in which representations of the grotesque is described as being akin to "life-giving water." Rather than a reflective-model of language, in which a medium represents a reality and offers it up for contemplation and informed action by the enlightenment subject, the operation described is one in which the medium "*drags* the modern man *forward*," reversing the subject-object relationship.

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[12] Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic, Grotesque, Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 29.
[13] Kim Ye-rim, *Modern Episteme and Aesthetic Consciousness in the late-1930s* (Sŏul: Somyŏng Ch'ulpansa, 2004), 261-263.
[14] "Kŏin Kimbugwi," *Pyŏlgŏngon*, September 1930.

Even after the 1920s, the discourse of "everyday life" continued to play a crucial role in the cultural politics of the Japanese colonial period. The late-1930s, in particular—marked by Japan's establishment of the New Order in East Asia—has been widely discussed as a period in which the relationship between representation, history, reality (*hyŏnsil*, 現実), and *saenghwal* was being re-examined and re-configured. After the 1935 dissolution of KAPF (Korea Artista Proletara Federatio), the formerly leftist literary critics could no longer put forth a vision of the future guided by Marxian universal history of revolution. Leftist poet and critic Im Hwa, for example, pushed for a more concrete understanding of "reality" that was based on *saenghwal*, while criticizing the "reality" of history as overly abstract.[15] Another leftist writer and critic Kim Namch'ŏn's late-1930s realism also turned to the everyday. Sunyoung Park has shown how Kim "stressed that a Korean writer should actively educe a sense of direction of history through close observation of everyday instead of more passively describing it as a determined outcome of dialectical necessity."[16] Park attributes this discursive shift not only to colonial repression, but the growing urban middle-class, "a depoliticized commercial culture," commodity-centered urban lifestyles, and the proliferation of mass media.[17] Yi Ch'ŏlho, writing on the discursive turn from reality (*hyŏnsil*) to "fact" (*sasil*, 事実) in the writing of Ch'oe Chaesŏ, Yu Chino, and Paek Ch'ŏl, argues that while *sasil* stood for fascist order, they often reverted to the use of *hyŏnsil*,

[15] In "Discovery of Everyday Life," Im writes, "the earlier motto 'depict reality exactly as it is' which was popular was accompanied by a footnote that what was needed was not some vague reality; instead what needed to be extracted was reality's 'truth' (*chin*)." This "truth," was understood to be reality of progressive history—in other words, a *historical reality*, and what was being searched for was a "sprout" of the future within the present, or "the nature (*ponjil*) of the present." In this essay, Im Hwa begins to privilege the *everydayness of the present* over this *ponjil*. The act of eating, marrying, working, raising of children—in other words, "the world of *saenghwal*"—has a "living form" while reality is an abstracted product that has combined "the phenomenon of *saenghwal* and the nature of history." It is, then, the category of *saenghwal* that is truly "material" and "realistic." In sum: "*Saenghwal* is the true reality!" See Im Hwa, "Saenghwalŭi Palgyŏn," *Munhakui Nolli*, (Sŏul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2009).
[16] Sunyoung Park, *The Proletarian Wave* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 242.
[17] Ibid., 244.

because they could not completely abandon the "latent realist potential" within *sasil*.[18] Chris Hanscom, drawing from the scholarship of Cha Sŭnggi and Yi Hyŏnsik, has shown how in the late-1930s, scientism began to lose its ontological ground and that the "very controversy around the concept of fact (*sasil*)" pointed to a moment in which "belief in forward development of history was shaken."[19]

The end of the Second World War and the collapse of the Japanese Empire seemed to herald the potential to restore this "forward development of history." Still, at the level of both everyday experience and intellectual discourse, the Korean people were reeling from consecutive historical traumas of what Theodore Hughes has called "double dislocation": first through late-colonial-period mobilization under Japanese rule, then through national division and post-liberation migration and the establishment of South Korea.[20] The destruction, bloodshed, displacement, familial separation, and widespread immiseration brought on by the Korean War only compounded the effect of this disorientation. Bearing such historical turmoil in mind, we should not be surprised to find overlapping and often contradictory legacies of socialist, cultural nationalist, imperialist, post-colonial, and neo-colonial articulations and representations of *saenghwal* in postwar South Korea. For example, even with the collapse of the Japanese Empire,

[18] Yi, *Yŏnghonŭi Kyebo*, 318.
[19] Christopher Hanscom, "Matters of Fact: Language, Science and Status of Truth in Late Colonial Korea," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review,* No. 10 (March 2014).
[20] Recent studies in 1950s Korean literature and film within the context of Cold War culture have shown how postwar South Korean society was a complicated and fraught cultural space of experience and memory, hardly monolithic in anti-communist ideology or triumphantly post-colonial in orientation as the Syngman Rhee regime might have wanted. For example, exploring the relationship between film and fashion, Steve Chung argues against the notion that 1950s was simply a period of aggressive Americanization, claiming that "the sophisticated luster of fashions and cinematic imagery of this period reached back implicitly to the refinement of the colonial period, when most of the filmmakers had apprenticed and enjoyed the material, if not moral, support of major, largely state-sponsored, Japanese studios," and calls for the need to be attentive to "multiple 'systems' at play in the period." See Steve Chung, *Split Screen Korea* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 47, 80. In a similar vein, Theodore Hughes shows how, while the Korean War is often understood as "firming up anticommunism and national division," actual literary and filmic "representations of war and its effects did not always coincide with the securing of a mobilized, statist citizenry." See Theodore Hughes, *Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea: Freedom's Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 92.

the sense of civilizational crisis that had energized the intellectual discourse of Pan-Asianism and the Kyoto School did not vanish after 1945. On the contrary, this deepening disavowal of Western modernity widespread during the era of total war mobilization became reworked, after Liberation, as a discourse of ambivalence about Western modernity (linked to mechanization, technocracy, scientism) in the postwar, linking arms with contemporaneous global intellectual trends.[21]

I have selected two essays from the period to help shed some preliminary light on this discursive trend. In "Modern Culture and Education," published in *Saegyoyuk*, Kim Hyŏngyang claimed that the forward progress of modernity has sacrificed ethics in the name of capitalism and scientism.[22] According to Kim, Western intellectual history, while moving through the Renaissance, humanism, and the eventual rejection of (and liberation from) God, ended up "negating ethics as an absolute" and reduced "truth to its usefulness." Modern culture's embrace of "relativity," he argues, can be observed in the political system of democracy. Democracy recognizes no absolutes and adds to the overall sense of anxiety and unease. Kim later links his critique of relativism to liberalism's privileging of choice. Freedom of choice is exercised in a morally-impoverished schema in which one only chooses something as an object of desire, foreclosing possibilities of investigating what *kind* of ideals to value, that is to say, what kind of *saenghwal* one should pursue. The modern man is therefore critiqued for not attempting to "uncover the goal of life" and "for avoiding eternal questions about truth" and "for turning their lives into pursuit of hobbies and pleasure." Kim goes on to argue that a "deeper question about fate" must be addressed by modern rationality. "All culture takes as its highest ideology the task

[21] For example, British historian and philosopher Arnold J. Toynbee, who was on the cover of TIME magazine in March 17, 1947 was one of many postwar historians and intellectuals engaged with the question of rise and decline of civilizations, which he addressed in his twelve volume, *A Study of History* (1934-1961).
[22] Kim Hyŏngyang, "Hyŏndae munhwawa kyoyuk" [modern culture and education], *Saegyoyuk*, June 1956, 10-18.

of figuring out the nature of things," he writes. "More than the nature of things, we feel that we cannot avoid the question of fate. It is through fate that the self can be resolved." Pedagogically, Kim calls for the kind of teaching that goes beyond instrumentality and pursues "human nature's unchanging totality." This can be achieved by teaching "character." The problem of teaching pragmatically is that "If all we need are technicians, that is, those who can be satisfied with a partial responsibility within society, and only emphasize the realistic and utilitarian in every context, then whose duty will it be to consider society in its totality? Who will propose the meaning of utility?" It is all the more striking that Kim's essay was published in *Saegyoyuk,* or "New Education," the official bulletin for an educational reform movement of the same name begun under the U.S. Military Occupation (1945-1948), meant to eradicate the educational legacy of the Japanese colonial period, cultivate national consciousness, and instill American-style democratic principles.[23]

In the same vein, education theorist Yi Haenam's "Modernity's Crisis and the Third Revolution" was equally critical of the course of modern civilization.[24] Despite advancements in technology that would soon make space travel a possibility, "human *saenghwal* is still unpleasant and riddled with problems." The modern city is compared to the Tower of Babel and the faceless and nameless masses to "a swarm of bees" that have lost their humanity. The explosion of

[23] While officially steered by the Ministry of Education, New Education invited educational specialists from the United States to help train up to 400 teachers and educators in South Korea. Many expressed doubt that new educational programs sponsored by the United States had any significant effect on the everyday lives of the Korean people. In a roundtable looking back on the program of "New Education," which had been designed to teach Western pedagogical ideals of individualism and self-motivation, one participant recalled ruefully that, "We lacked methodological fundamentals… They just replaced 'Pledge of Loyal Imperial Subject' with 'Our Pledge,' and swapped the picture of Kusunoki Masashige with that of Admiral Yi Sun-shin. We were busy just reproducing everything we'd learned during the colonial rule, and we didn't have room to think about anything else." Many others agreed with this sentiment. Another article titled, "What was this so-called 'New Education'?" stated "democratic education cannot do much if there is no change in how one thinks or in ways of *saenghwal*. There can be no democratic progress just through discussion." See "Chwadamhoe: saegyoyuk undong'ŭl torabomyŏ" [roundtable: looking back at the new education movement], *Saegyoyuk*, September 1959, 8-18.

[24] Yi Haenam, "Hyŏndaeŭi wigiwa chesamhyŏkmyŏng" [modernity's crisis and the third revolution], *Chayugongnon*, n.a. 1959, 38-45.

culture has led to a lack of culture. Cheap pocketbook editions of novels are flooding the market along with newspapers, movies, radio and television, which corrupt the spiritual condition of man. "Culture," Yi writes, "is destroying tradition." This 'culture' is neither Western nor Eastern; that is to say, it is neither European, defined as "a mix of humanism stemming from Greco-Roman and Christian culture" nor Eastern, defined as an amalgam of Confucianism, Buddhism and other popular religions. Yi sees two trends when the world is faced with an economic crisis: 1) a tendency to try to resolve the problem of *saenghwal* with technology (which he calls a form of materialism) or through pursuit of "egoistic pleasure" without any limits or constraints 2) to partake from the "opiate of communism." Yi writes that the current state of crisis is unprecedented. It is the nature of human beings to pursue material and spiritual security in one's *saenghwal*. Modern man seeks refuge in the thought of a messiah, or finds solace in temporary escape "by going to the movies, by taking to drink, by appreciating the beauty of landscapes, or retreating to sexual amusement or love, but none of these facilities of rest provided by civilization provide adequate respite." The "Third Revolution" is for "the brotherhood of man." He argues that the modern man's inevitable return to new forms of religion in the form of hero worship, Moral Re-Armament (MRA), and faith in communism is a reaction to the intolerable conditions of uncertainty that modernity has brought about. In his diatribe against modern life, Yi calls for an overthrow of "materialism" (presumably, referring to the idolization of commodities, science, and technology) and the ideology of 'survival of the fittest' in the name of brotherly love.

The ambivalence towards Western civilizational influence was necessarily linked to deep dissatisfaction about the spiritual and moral poverty of modern *saenghwal*. It is important to note that this form of ambivalence was not limited to intellectual discourse. For example, in general-

interest magazine *Shinch'ŏnji*, a special-issue appeared on "New Life." The issue dealt with the subject of happiness[25]; urban planning[26]; rituals and rites[27]; civilization and culture; [28] and clarification of terms such as freedom and equality.[29] Among these essays, Cho P'ungyŏn's "The Problem on the Basis for Cultural Life" is particularly useful for bringing to the fore a discursive strategy that reserves room for Korean tradition within the civilizational crisis discussed by Kim and Yi above. Cho distinguishes "civilization" from "culture," by linking the former to "materiality" and the latter to "spirituality." For example, the printed image in its physical form is "civilization," while the original prior to its printing—as an idea—is "culture." This idiosyncratic formulation allows Cho to emphasize the conceptual, mental, and religious dimension of (Korean) cultural development, while de-emphasizing Korea's material poverty.

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[25] According to Yun Sŏngsang, it is problematic to believe happiness is completely subjective. Simply fulfilling one's desires erases the difference between world of animals and that of human beings. The object of pursuit has to "be more beautiful, superior, noble, good, proper and wholesome, than mere happiness." Yun eventually traces the source of the problem to "money" and while acknowledging that this tendency to put money over all things, in light of South Korea's poverty and war, is understandable, what must be sought is "training and refining one's character and cultivation" and "eternal happiness, which requires one to become an active worker." The linking of labor and spiritual fulfillment. The article also puts the primary emphasis on the nation's good. ("Without the stability of the nation, there can be no individual happiness.") See Yun Sŏngsang "New Life and the Views of Happiness by Modern Women," *Shinch'ŏnji,* October 1954, 110 -130.

[26] Kim Kyŏng'in "New Life and the Beautification of the Environment," *Shinch'ŏnji,* October 1954, 110 -130.

[27] In discussing the rites and rituals *guan* (coming of age ceremony), *hon* (wedding), *sang* (funeral), *je* (ancestral rites), Ch'oe concludes by pointing out that it is common sense to know one's national rituals. Furthermore, these practices have to be performed with spiritual investment and there has to be respect and piety. Then there is a jarringly abrupt reference that "licentious parties and frivolous jazz music cannot be a part of it." See Ch'oe Sŏkju, "Shinsaenghwalkwa cheban ŭishiŭi munje," *Shinch'ŏnji*, October 1954, 119-123.

[28] Cho P'ung'yŏn, "The Problem of the Basis for Cultural Life," *Shinch'ŏnji*, October 1954, 110 -130.

[29] Perhaps the most striking aspect of O's article is his criticism of women who attempt to adopt Western ways. He refers to the establishment of Kuŭn'hoe in 1927, which led to "deformed households" because women could not properly reconcile Western, Japanese and Korean traditions. His critique of dancing is particularly revealing; "good for social occasions," he writes, "but I am skeptical about whether [women] are equipped with the Western cultivation that would allow them to restrain their sensual excitement." This remark leads to a longer explanation which attempts to clarify the true meaning of 'freedom' and 'equality,' which are concepts fundamental to democracy. For O, freedom can mean 1) to be liberated from external constraint, 2) freedom to reflect on or willfully constrain one's internal urge or instinctive desire, 3) and as this free will deepens to a purified state, then one achieves the freedom of conscience that is not obstructed by temptations. This is the "freedom of character" that is able to put to practice one's "freedom of conscience." In the case of equality, it is not meant to be understood as men and women being equal. Inequality is "when women cannot enjoy all the rights she deserves to enjoy *as a woman* and when men cannot enjoy all the rights he deserves to enjoy *as a man*." He claims when women try to "imitate men" it leads to a form of perversion that ignores the biological difference between the sexes.
O Chongsik, "The Fundamental Direction of Life Reform," *Shinch'ŏnji*, October 1954, 110-130.

While obstacles remain—among them, Korea's position "at the edge of Asia," its "long history of being invaded," its penchant for reactionary attitudes, tendency of timidity and factionalism—these vestiges can be "washed away," as long as Korea is able to discover the "cultural spirit" hiding behind the material civilization.

Cho's skepticism about "the materiality" of civilization—concretized with the revealing example of "the printed image"—is also reflected in Yi Haenam's critique of mass culture, which he characterizes as "cheap pocketbook editions of novels…newspapers, movies, radio, and television." It would be misleading, however, to assume that cultural productions of the era were universally perceived to be base, spiritually corrupt, and dehumanizing. In spite of these cynical articulations about mass society, South Korean writers, artists, photographers, and filmmakers were engaged in mapping the real and imagined terrain of postwar everyday life in rural and urban spaces that was affirmative, philosophically sophisticated, and socially critical and constructive. By examining such cultural texts across media and representational genres, we can arrive at a rich, multi-layered, and on-the-ground account of how Koreans in South Korea returned to the idea of "forward development of history" (which had been suspended in the late-1930s) and the place of everyday life within it. In the next section, I will situate this approach of intermedial analysis among some well-established studies on everyday life.

Intermediality as an Approach for Understanding Everyday Life

While it is common outside of Asian studies to equate the study of everyday life with European thinkers like Fernand Braudel, Henri Lefebvre, and Michel de Certeau, I hope to have shown that long before the postwar emergence of these scholars, there was already a great deal of interest in the experience of temporality of everyday life in East Asia at the level of both

theory and practice. This can be traced to Japan's early and rapid modernization in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, transforming not only social, cultural, and economic structures, and how everyday life was being experienced at the granular level. (As Suzy Kim points out, "There was no everyday as such before modernity precisely because each day lacked the objective continuity of clockwork. Time was attached to space, unique to each locality, and each day had yet to be encompassed within a universal homogeneous temporality."[30]) As indicated in the previous section, the interest in everyday life emerged in Japan and Korea alongside dissemination of mass culture. Harootunian's account of 1920s Japan is especially illuminating in its tracing the relationship between the emergence of new media, popular culture, and intellectual discourse about the everyday and situating it midst a contemporaneous global discourse about everyday life in the modern world.

> At the same moment that popular discourse exploded in new media like film, mass-circulating magazines, opinion journals, radio, and newspapers to figure and fantasize the new everydayness that was being installed in Japan's larger cities in the 1920s, thinkers, social researchers, and critics were busily involved in envisioning the experience of modernity and its constituent elements—speed, shock, sensation, and spectacle— through an optics that produced differing effects according to the angle of the lens through which experience was being refracted. These refractions distilled certain intensities in the experience of modern life and privileged others to present a vision of everyday life that was both enabling for the present and promising for a future as of yet unenvisaged.[31]

One gleans from Harootunian's analysis the extent to which the encounter with everyday life, and its "constituent elements" had to do with the realm of *mediated* experience: "speed, shock, sensation, and spectacles." The fractured nature of the diverse accounts (the "optics" of "different effects") provided differing accounts of "everyday life" and its emancipatory potential. While Martin Heidegger was critiquing everyday life as a "source of negativity and mediocrity," Japanese intellectuals attempted to redeem the utopic promise of the present, seeing it as an

[30] Suzy Kim, *Everyday Life in the North Korean Revolution 1945-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2013), 18-19.
[31] Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 95.

"escape from a binding past" and "a hope for the better future."[32] Tosaka Jun, for example, proposed that "everyday life provided the principles to organize both time and space"; Gonda Yasunosuke "declared that people's pleasure derived from the experience of everydayness"; Kon Wajirō produced meticulous ethnographic representations of everyday practices of city dwellers following the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake, insisting that "daily life and its transactions in home and on the streets as the source of subjectivity."[33] What makes these intellectual efforts akin to the contemporaneous project of the Frankfurt School (for example, by Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin) is that they were invested in the role of everyday life in mass society within a global capitalist system.

In Harootunian's historicization, "everyday life" as both a structure and an imaginary within the capitalist system underwent a profound shift in Japan due to its early and rapid modernization. Japan's advancement has the impact of shattering the "geopolitical monopoly of modernity," giving the lie to the myth that "modernity was solely a Western idea."[34] The spatial bifurcation of "civilized West" and "ethnographic non-West" was broken, and reconfigured as a "space of everyday life rooted in a specific location yet connected to a broader context of space/time."[35] This "broader context of space/time" is the capitalist network that cannot be easily discerned by the untrained eye. While it is not readily visible, everydayness of metropolitan life still "included relations that stretched far beyond the borders and experience of a singular locale, reaching a new kind of unboundedness, in which space was increasingly torn away from place by 'fostering relations between absent others.'"[36] Everyday life, then, was an index for the very

[32] Ibid., 95.
[33] Ibid., 98.
[34] Harry Harootunian, *History's Disquiet*: *Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 63.
[35] Ibid., 63.
[36] Ibid., 64.

"unevenness that capitalist political economy" had created, and the "phantasmagoric" aspect of life in cities such as "Tokyo/Yokohama, Shanghai, Calcutta, and Rio Janeiro" was a symptom of the everyday's integration into a capitalist political economy.[37]

Even within the postwar context, the trope of "phantasmagoria"—the idea of everyday life as an exhibition of real and fantastic images—is useful for understanding one of the central problematics in the studies of everyday life. Privileging everyday life as an epistemological site that lends itself to materialist historical analysis means that everyday life must have totalizing and revolutionary potential—that is to say, it must signify *beyond* what it only appears to show on the surface, that its structures must lend themselves to deciphering and actionable knowledge. Emphasizing everyday life restores agency to the temporality of ordinary life, and yet risks losing grasp of underlying capitalist structures. In the case of Henri Lefebvre, he sought to address this problematic through a dialectical approach. As Ben Highmore observes regarding Lefebvre, "The dialectic between the practical and the theoretical, between the concrete and the abstract, requires a mutual and continual testing. There is no empirical reality that can simply be encountered so that it will reveal the forces that produced it."[38] This allows Lefebvre to "counterbalance" the limitations of philosophy ("truth without reality") with limitations of everyday life ("reality without truth").[39] In this way, he preserved the importance of everyday life as a unit of epistemological valuation without dispensing with the need for materialist analysis. While "the commodity, the market, money, with their implacable logic, seize everyday life" penetrating down to its "slightest details," Lefebvre also believed that "a revolution cannot

[37] Ibid., 64.
[38] Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 116.
[39] Ibid., 116.

just change the political personnel or institutions; it must change *la vie quotidienne*, which has already been literally colonized by capitalism."[40]

For the purpose of this dissertation, Lefebvre's approach is useful for two notable reasons. The first is the relationship between coloniality and everyday life which is re-spatialized into the postwar/post-colonial urban geography. Kristin Ross has argued that the idea of "colonization of everyday life by capitalism should be taken literally as the continuation and transformation of the processes and forces of imperialism."[41] Within this logic, the postwar "re-ordering of the world" has given rise to new configurations of imperialism both globally and locally. While the postwar/post-colonial problematic for France and Algeria certainly differs from Korea's colonial/neo-colonial ties to Japan and the United States, thinking through everyday life through the framework of coloniality allows us to re-imagine the political significance of urban mapping across multiple media in the context of post-liberation and postwar South Korea (as I do in Chapters 1 and 2 of the dissertation). Moreover, the dialectical approach of Lefebvre's work allows us to understand the project of representing urban *saenghwal* as philosophy *and* practice—the act of quotidian representation and circulation as a collective process of social construction.

The second insight Lefebvre offers is more as a point of comparison rather than as a guiding framework. One of Lefebvre's central theoretical contributions is the concept of *la fête* (the festival) which is "part of popular everyday life but…also a radical reconfiguring of daily life that is anything but everyday."[42] While it derives its inspiration from medieval social form of the carnival characterized by "bacchanalian indulgence" and "its celebrations of the 'low material body' and satirical inversions of dominant social relations," Lefebvre situates *la fête* at

[40] Ibid., 117.
[41] Ibid., 117.
[42] Ibid., 122.

the end of history, in fact, as a way of overcoming history. For him, *la fête*, standing symbolically for "dialogic moments of struggle,"[43] exist as a "a moment 'other' to the capitalist everyday," and a way to restore totality and reclaim humanity from the alienating processes of modernity. This final stage of history, he links to the notion of "total man," which Highmore describes as "a universal subjectivity, a vague invocation of the 'true' nature of humankind."[44] Lefebvre's desire to rescue humankind from its currently divided and alienated form, its humanity brutalized by bureaucratizing, mechanizing, and rationalizing processes of modern civilization, should be reminiscent of critiques of modernity I have discussed within the postwar South Korean context.

In contrast to Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau's study of everyday life placed greater emphasis on the poetics of everyday strategies of ordinary people rather than capitalist structures of control. As the very title of his seminal book *The Practice of Everyday Life* suggests, de Certeau focused on "'making do' with a ready-made culture…(through acts of appropriation and re-employment)."[45] These strategies are not merely individual instances but effects of heterogeneous cultural histories, traditions, imaginaries, memories, and habits that are asserting themselves to resist hegemonic structures of capitalist organization.[46] In the chapter "Walking in the City," de Certeau combines the figure of the anonymous flâneur and speech act theory to articulate how moments of creative resistance can be possible within a pre-planned system of social organization. He writes, "the act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered."[47] containing a "triple 'enunciative' function": 1) the pedestrian appropriates "the topographical system" just as the "speaker appropriates and takes on

[43] Ibid., 125.
[44] Ibid., 127.
[45] Ibid., 148.
[46] Ibid., 148.
[47] Michel de Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 97.

the language"; 2) the pedestrian "acts out" the place through his actions (the way speech "acts out" the language acoustically); 3) the act of walking "implies relations among differentiated positions" enacting social relations much like speech act "puts contracts between interlocutors into action."

The Practice of Everyday Life appeared over three decades after the first volume of Lefebvre's *Critique of Everyday Life*, and this generational difference, in part, explains De Certeau's focus on consumer appropriation rather than the regime of production and distribution; it may be an implicit acknowledgement of a deeper entrenchment of the consumerist-capitalist order. Moreover, his reluctance to plot the epistemology of everyday life on a revolutionary trajectory towards the end of history (as we saw in Lefebvre) stems from the lesson of May 1968—its "failure" attributed to "popular poetics being met by the language of official reform and organized politics."[48] If Lefebvre's goal was to mobilize inquiry of everyday life towards the fulfillment of "total man" and *la fête*, the overcoming of the capitalist everyday, then de Certeau wanted to re-imagine politics for the everyday that already existed. As Highmore puts it, "What would a politics be like that emerged from the everyday, instead of one that was simply applied to the everyday?"[49]

As with Lefebvre, the lessons of de Certeau apply unevenly to the context of immediate-postwar South Korea, but they are not entirely incommensurate. While it would be far-fetched to claim that anything resembling fully-operational consumer society existed in reconstruction-era Seoul, it is not unreasonable to suppose that strategies of re-appropriation and "making-do" were all the more impactful in semi-sovereign, semi-militarized urban geographies, where the domestic economy was propped up by U.S. aid, where the re-emergence of consumer and leisure

[48] Highmore, *Everyday Life*, 149.
[49] Ibid., 149.

culture overlapped with fresh memories of war casualties, and where the battle of everyday life was not simply against homogeneity, repetition, and boredom, but for human dignity and survival. Reading Im Ŭngsik's photograph "Restricted Zone" (1950) through the framework of "making-do," we see more than a simple case of civilian violation of a municipal or military decree [Figure 2]. We notice the deep disconnect between the edicts of the ruling apparatus and the everyday lives of the people who must negotiate them. The woman who is the protagonist of the shot labors as she stands, while a child she carries on her back sleeps with its head tilted back at a disconcerting angle, casting a sense of unease. The sewing work is most likely to keep herself and her family fed during these hard times. Down below, a man sits studying the newspaper. Nobody pays attention to the writing on the wall ("*Keep Clear…Red Cross Only*") though it is written in both English and Korean. Most likely, there is nowhere else for them to go. Reading such a photograph alongside Nam Chŏnghyŏn's satirical short story "Warning Area" (1958), as I do in Chapter 2, brings to sharp relief creative and subversive ways in which everyday signifiers of governmentality regulating civilian life were appropriated and re-deployed.

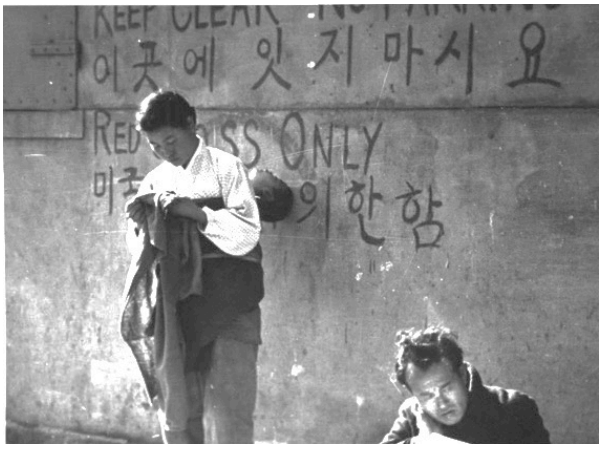


Figure 2. Im Ŭngsik's "Restricted Zone" (1950)

If the culture of everyday life of the 1920s Japan, as Harootunian observed, is best understood through a careful study of the range of "optics that produced differing effects" of the

experience of modernity, something similar might be said about the postwar reality of everyday life in South Korea. Rather than privileging any specific medium, genres of representation or modes of criticism as the authoritative account of how everyday life was imagined and lived during this period, I weave together a network of exhibits and media to make a case for the importance of intermediation of everyday life in understanding the culture of postwar South Korea. While intermediality, like the experience of the everyday, is part-and-parcel of modernity (since the proliferation of new media is part-and-parcel of the unfolding of capitalist modernity), it took on special historical significance at the postwar conjuncture.

As I will discuss at length in Chapter 3, after the Second World War, government and inter-governmental organizations such as The United States Information Service (USIS) and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) launched educational and cultural programs to lay the foundations for modernization and democratization in numerous sites around the developing world. One project by UNESCO in particular, called "Fundamental Education" (FE) sought to carry out the program of improving everyday lives of ordinary people around the developing world as a fundamental good for humanity. They also had a tendency to disavow their own ideological and political goals (even within their internal documents), choosing to see their projects as intrinsically different from the propaganda campaign of mobilization by totalitarian powers during wartime. This ideal of mass education as a project stripped of ideological and political implications was linked to an emergent utopic discourse about audio-visual education. Conferences were held in Mexico City, New Delhi, San Francisco, and Bangkok on the subject of how educational media might be best utilized to produce lasting change in its subjects. The transformation envisioned by these programs went beyond disseminating specific kinds of knowledge, or teaching a set of skills, or even producing

a patterned behavior; it entailed a total re-orientation of individuals towards their everyday material environment, community, and nation. The goal of FE was no less than to bring about a revolution of everyday life through the transformation of one's consciousness, and this process in its very conception was intermedial.

It is perhaps not surprising that FE's faith and reliance on audio-visual media was expressed intermedially—a celebration of media documenting their own triumphant co-deployment. Still, the archive FE has left behind is curiously self-reflexive and bespeaks a strain of anxiety about its own efficacy: photographs of people printing photographs, film reels depicting educational film equipment on display, and most notably, images of people looking at images. The 1950s educational film "Community Action," for example, combines the genre of animation and a live-action educational film to drive home a point about cooperative action. The conceit, if unwieldy and contrived, is still startling for its experimental flair. The message of the education film is first conveyed through a whimsical and humorous animation, in which three characters face a problem, which they resolve through cooperation. Then the live-action component portrays actors reading the comics as posters on the wall and finding themselves getting embroiled in that very same conflict. This frame-within-a-frame structure achieves more than simply a reiteration of the same point for emphasis. It creates a portal of subjectification into which the viewer can step into by stacking one plane of diegetic space behind another. This self-reflexive strategy of interpellation is a symptom of what I describe in Chapters 3 and 5 as visuality of postwar enlightenment, which unlike totalitarian modes of mass visuality, idealize individuated, isolated, and contemplative subjects of visual consumption. The photographic archive of USIS in South Korea is particularly useful for analyzing this model of visuality: documentation of Koreans looking at signs, poster boards, public announcements, and other

forms of public exhibitions [Figure 3]. The shots are often from a distance, which marks the gap of surveillance of the overseer whose position oscillates between that of management and control. This gap produces anxiety, but it is essential for maintaining the enlightenment rationale of the postwar order (as well as its implied hierarchy): the neo-colonial overseers must differentiate themselves from earlier forms of massified indoctrination, which is now regarded as backwards, illiberal, dehumanizing, and coercive.

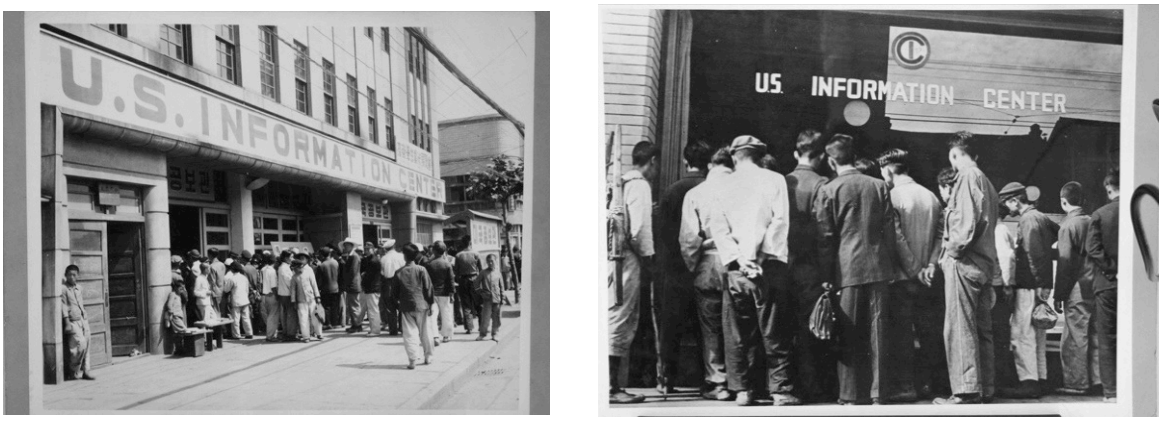
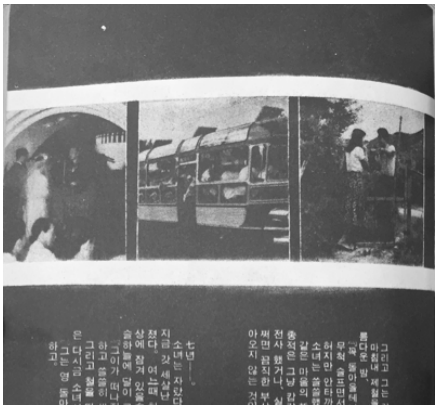


Figure 3. Outside the USIS office in South Korea

Spreading midst such internally strained forms of intermediality mobilized towards the goal of ideological interpellation (i.e. enlightenment) were locally deployed media assemblages beholden to no set paradigm or program. For example, the genre of "the camera-novel" (discussed in Chapter 1) appeared in the women's monthly magazine *Yŏwŏn* sporadically for a few installments before disappearing. Another example is a segment called, "Poem and Photograph" [Figure 4], which simply printed a poem over a background of a photograph. (What is surprising there is not that a photograph and a poem are printed together, but that each mode of representation is labeled, announced, and valued equally—one held in suspension against the other—rather than having the photograph naturally fade back into a decorative role.) From today's perspective, these modes of representation may appear as insignificant examples of curio or dead-end genre experiments, but I see the desire to rely on the resources of newly available

media to fully express the multiple modes of experiencing, documenting, feeling, and remembering everyday life. For example, in one "scene" of the camera-novel, a sequence of photographic images is laid out in a series of panels which are depicted like a roll of film, thereby drawing on medium-specific associations of camera film as a kind of storehouse of personal memories [Figure 5]. The significance of this medium-specific reference can only be fully understood once we grasp the postwar emergence of the culture of popular photography.

Figure 4. Poem and Photograph.
Source: *Yŏwŏn*



Figures 5. A scene from a "camera- novel"
Source: *Yŏwŏn*

Even more importantly, I read these examples of media hybridity as an awareness about broader interconnectedness of media in everyday life. As a way of demonstrating this interconnectedness, my readings in Chapters 1 and 2 focus on image and textual depictions of urban streetscapes across different representative modes and media. Chapter 1 focuses on streetscape-reportage, photo journalism, artistic photography, the camera novel, and reportage and human-interest pieces. The streetscape-reportage, which emerged as a minor genre in various magazine publications during the post-liberation period, privileged a flâneur subject as he walked through recording Seoul's changing urban geography. While the ethos behind the documentary impulse was *realist*, its aesthetic was animated by *modernist* energies—in other words, the genre employed fragmentation and montage to provide glimpses of historical

processes and structures through the visuality of everyday street life. (The mediated experience of synesthesia conjured historical memories, reminiscent of Harootunian's "phantasmagoria.") In one example, the flâneur wonders if he actually hears the sound of Japanese *geta* in Ch'ungmuro, which used be a Japanese enclave of Honmachi during the colonial occupation. In another piece set in Seoul after the Korean War, the walk in the city leads to pleasure districts that service foreign soldiers or zones forbidden from access by American military barricades. Such works of reportage, which appeared in various image-text combinations, employing illustrations, photography, pithy captions, or impressionistic reporting situated the spatio-temporality of everyday life shaped by lingering effects of Japanese colonialism and ongoing contestations with U.S. geopolitical hegemony. A common target of everyday critique during the post-liberation and postwar era was the visibility of foreign commodities circulating through the streets of Seoul. Other targets included foreign media (books, fashion magazines, department store catalogues), movie billboards and posters, advertising images, store signs, and finally, "foreign" bodies, which included those of children fathered by non-Korean soldiers. The documentation and distribution of these reportage image-texts by writers, artists, photographers, and magazine provided, by turns, news, rumor, voyeuristic pleasure, the thrill of scandal, and social critique. They also played an inherently socially constructive role by weaving together a shared virtual network through which the audience could collectively imagine postwar Seoul.

Chapter 2 continues to explore the intermediality of urban everyday life, but with an emphasis on literature and criticism. In the postwar years, the literary mode of "naturalism" came under attack by writers and critics of disparate aesthetic and ideological orientation, such as Paek Ch'ŏl, Chang Yonghak, and Kim Tongni, all of whom linked this mode of literature to the epistemological and ontological legacy of empiricism, rationalism, and scientism. Their

dissatisfaction with naturalism can be understood as standing in for a dissatisfaction over modern *saenghwal* and its representation, as well as over the underlying contradictions of social, economic, and political conditions that constituted postwar modernity in South Korea. We can also link the decline of naturalism in these critics' estimation to the broader sense of "crisis" about the material civilization of Western modernity that I have discussed at some length in this introduction. I argue that this sense of civilizational "crisis" may be re-formulated within the literary discursive field as a *postwar crisis of representation*, which emerged from ongoing post-colonial, Cold War, and intermedial dynamics. I understand postwar crisis of representation as an extension of the epistemological dimension of the crisis of representation (which tends to focus on the unbridgeable gap between language and reality), to include the related problematic of the uncertain relationship between human beings and commodities in an impoverished postwar society. If, in Chapter 1, we look at how reportage and photography mapped public sites of exchange in urban space, zooming in on the influx of commodities and foreign media, Chapter 2 shows how literary works were also focusing on the lives of commodities in South Korea society, especially as they circulated midst war damaged bodies reeling from dislocation, poverty, and malaise. In addition to my treatment of literary criticism and its negotiation with naturalism and modern *saenghwal*, I produce close-readings of short fiction by Yi Muyŏng, Kim Kwangju, Kim Kwangsik, Nam Chŏnghyŏn, and Ha Kŭnch'an, some of which, despite having been authored by major writers of the period, have escaped scholarly attention. My readings focus on ways in which these works were informed by or deliberately appropriated modes of visuality from other media and representational forms to enrich and complicate their narratives and the experience of everyday life.

Chapter 3 turns our attention to the countryside. In addition to a fuller account of UNESCO's Fundamental Education and audio-visual education (as introduced above), the chapter elaborates on political, philosophical, aesthetic arguments within Korean print culture that rendered their own vision of the role that the South Korean countryside should play in the process of modernization. For example, agricultural magazines such as *Nongmin saenghwal* ("Farmer's Life") and *Singnyangkwa nong'ŏp* ("Food and Agriculture"), even while they targeted "backwards" practices and beliefs of life in the countryside, simultaneously launched critiques against urban *saenghwal*, which was characterized as vain, decadent, wasteful, and empty. Far from relegating the countryside as a fantastic-nostalgic space of reverie and refuge, they positioned rural *saenghwal* as the spiritual foundation for leading the rest of the nation on its proper path of modern progress. My sources include a close-reading of the final report *The Brief History of Rural Leaders Training Centre* compiled by director Choi Sung Jun (with a standout section titled, "Pages from My Diary"), the portrayal of women rural leaders in educational films and in popular magazines, oral testimonies of film projectionists and *pyŏnsa* (movie narrators) who worked in outdoor cinemas of the period, and philosophical essays by South Korean writers on the sensorial faculty of "seeing" and "hearing" and their epistemological, ontological, and aesthetic legacies in Eastern and Western civilizations. These local discourses adopted, appropriated, subverted, or directly countered the global and universalist discourse of postwar audio-visual enlightenment. The postwar revival of *pyŏnsa*, in particular, exemplifies how pure cinema's tendency towards interpellation and absorption, achieved with the help of sound-technology and wartime mobilization, was "disaggregated," yielding forms of spectatorship that were more open, participatory, sensual, and indigenously-inflected than urban in-door cinema culture.

Chapter 4 turns to postwar cinema and the discourse of "everyday feeling" (*saenghwal kamjŏng*) in the film discourse of this period. I use this concept as a linchpin to bring together the contemporaneous debates about 1) plagiarism/imitation, 2) realism/neorealism, and 3) *sinp'a*/melodrama. The expanding market for film spectatorship and the dearth of material and human resources meant that South Korean filmmakers often relied on scripts and film ideas from abroad. Japanese adaptations and imitations—in some case, near copies—were common and frowned upon by film critics, government officials, and other industry observers. Meanwhile, Italian neorealist films such as *La Strada* became commonly referenced models for ways in which South Korean cinema could achieve local authenticity *and* global universality. Neorealism's perceived prestige was bolstered not only by appealing to its faithful rendering of postwar Italy's social reality, but also by pointing to their emotional power to genuinely move the audience. This form of affective power was differentiated from the power of films dismissively labeled *sinp'a*—considered cheaply sentimental, emotionally-exaggerated, and languorously paced. By contrast, the ideal of "melodrama" (often, just *mello*), linked to the modern, the Western, and the urbane, was characterized by dynamic mobility of shots, artful performances by actors, and rhythmic pacing in the editing. I argue in this chapter that what ties these disparate discursive phenomena (of plagiarism, neorealism, and *sinp'a*) together is an ongoing crisis of emotional authenticity, for which the term "everyday feelings" was a primary symptom. While the concept "everyday feelings" appeared to refer to the most quotidian, self-evident facet of one's inner life, the term also performed the rhetorical function of re-familiarizing a mass-mediated social reality in which communal affect was increasingly a product of technologies of spectacle. My readings of individual films build on themes previously explored in Chapters 1 and 2 through reportage, photography, and literary texts, such as the

visuality of mobility and the crisis of masculinity and semi-sovereignty, with a sustained focus on the primacy of sentiment (of waiting and wanting, for example). My analysis of Shin Sang-ok's film *One College Woman's Confession* returns to the question of the relationship between plagiarism and emotional authenticity by exploring the film's meta-cinematic appropriation of *pyŏnsa*-mode of movie-telling which is fused with the performance of legal testimony.

Finally, Chapter 5 continues with the emphasis on the important theme of sentiment in everyday life while exploring the global dissemination of Edward Steichen's vision of "universal everydayness of life." Steichen's original MoMA exhibit *The Family of Man* consisted of 503 photographs taken by 273 photographers from 68 countries, and eventually went on to be seen by 9 million exhibition-goers in 37 countries (including South Korea) through an extended traveling exhibition sponsored by USIS. The first part of the chapter examines how Korean writers, photographers, critics, and the popular press re-scripted the meaning of Steichen's exhibit, showing that the spectacle constituted a protracted intermedial event that served as a point of discursive convergence for multiple assumptions and interests, both ideological and aesthetic. In other words, the very terms by which the idea of "universal everydayness" was being understood and deployed in South Korea was being co-authored by local actors. The second section reads *The Family of Man* as symptomatic of the postwar nuclear age. Despite its ostensibly open format and deployment of photography's power to evoke intense feeling in the viewer, the curatorial ideology was informed by enlightenment principles of humanism and rational action driving forward a clear message to the world: in the nuclear age, humankind has no choice but to get along. Meanwhile, postwar literary culture in South Korea was thinking through the neurosis of the nuclear era through its own reflections on rationality and mass-visuality. My readings of Ch'u Sik and Yi Muyŏng's works focus on themes of nihilism, *ressentiment*, and madness,

which were emblematic themes for literary works of this period. If Steichen's curatorial design was meant to foster democratic sensibility through global distribution of images, these works called into question the utopic, edifying potential of mass visuality, linking it (in Yi Muyŏng's case) to the visuality of apocalyptic mass death. In the third section, I examine how *Tonga Ilbo's* adaptation of *The Family of Man* into "Human Family" re-wrote Steichen's universalist rhetoric, reworking its visuality of isolation and individuation to emphasize reciprocity, proximity, participation, and bodily communion. By looking at both "what" and "how" of Steichen's exhibit—that is, both the photographic content of *The Family of Man* and its idealized model of an isolated, individuated spectator for effective reception of this content—I elaborate on the strengths and limits of postwar enlightenment visuality which I began in Chapter 3 within the context of global enlightenment program, showing the potential for emergent affective counter-strategies (of which "Human Family" is one example).

Despite exploring multiple media and representative modes of the postwar period, by no means is the dissertation meant to provide an exhaustive account of *saenghwal* in South Korea. In the first instance, the dissertation focuses on the *representation* of everyday life—that is to say, everyday life as discourse, a concept, a philosophy, a site of collective or private debates and deliberations. The task of delineating the granular, multi-dimensional everyday experiences of specific groups of people, such as women factory workers, de-mobilized soldiers, war orphans, widows, or refugees from the North have been conducted at length in fields of sociology and history in Korean-language scholarship. Extending the intermedial approach to the everyday to go beyond state-sponsored discourse, art photography, literature, criticism, film, and popular print culture, we may potentially incorporate even more vernacular archives, such as personal collections of photographs, diaries, books, and magazines. While we should always be cautious

about overplaying the significance of a specific rendering of everyday life as representative, dominant, or hegemonic, there is also the danger of overemphasizing the distinction between "representation" and "reality" and returning to the epistemological impasse of the crisis of representation, which belabored the gap between language and reality. The emergence of everyday life as temporal and experiential mode was part-and-parcel of massification of life processes, which included not only capitalist forms of production, distribution, and consumption, but was also accompanied by the emergence of flexible and mobile intermedial networks which can never be held completely captive by the overlapping governmentality of state and capital. Everyday life, in this sense, as a modern subject-making process, has always been self-reflexive; whether driven towards totality or singularity, its fantasy of perpetual progress and nightmare of hopeless repetition have functioned like a Möbius strip, the discursive outside twisting into the inner surface of experience and vice versa.

In concluding this introduction, I return to the question raised in its epigraph by critic Paek Ch'ŏl, who pointed to political corruption, economic disorder, and rampant poverty among ordinary citizens as worrisome symptoms of a dysfunctional postwar society. Yet in asking, "Is this, then, South Korea's social reality?" he answers ultimately in the negative, calling on his readers to look past what he describes as an "illusory realm" (*kasang*) of everyday contemporary phenomena to discover the dynamic historical transformations underway: a "seed" (*miral*) of rebirth that can nonetheless sprout even midst the "rubbish" (*pukdegi*) of the illusory realm.

> Regarding the question of how to understand the phenomenon of crisis visible throughout the world, we are called upon to avoid the nearsighted-perspective and grasp it as an inevitable phenomenon of historical transition. In other words, from a historical perspective, the crisis of today is not a phenomenon that has been settled, but a sign of a dynamic process and metamorphosis. In particular, if what remains quickly collapses, and the moment of crisis is an expression of a restructuring of a new historical system, we

> should not look at this era's confusing phenomena simply as chaos or regard them pessimistically as something negative, but as the birth pangs (*t'aedonggi*) of new life.[50]

Even the "despair" of national division, Paek goes on to say, should be reconsidered as a sign of global change in process, a site of historical potentiality. By calling on world-historical events, such as the Hungarian Uprising of 1956 against Soviet-influenced Hungarian People's Republic and the Suez Crisis, the outcome of which heralded the decline of Great Britain as a world power,[51] Paek equates the older exploitative regimes of European imperialism with the "rebirthed authoritarian political structure" of the Soviet Union, both of which are historically and ethically "impermissible" and doomed to collapse. Paek's privileging of genuine democracy over democracy of "slogans" and "mere formality" was an implicit critique of Syngman Rhee's corrupt autocracy. Even more notable are the ways in which Paek re-configures the older discursive formations of everyday life: for instance, the Marxist commitment to "objective reality" underlying an illusory realm which needs to be apprehended to become a true subject of historical change, or the spirituality of Taisho-era Japanese Romantic thought which emphasized the dynamic vitality of life (*saengmyŏng*) and rebirth. Like so many writers, photographers, filmmakers, and intellectuals discussed in the subsequent chapters to come, Paek re-worked these older formulations of everyday life to face the discursive challenges of the Cold War present, to mobilize meaningful strategies for historical agency and social critique within locally-confined spatio-temporality of the everyday.

[50] Paek Ch'ŏl, "Kasangsogesŏdo mirarŭn charanda" [a seed of grain can sprout even in the illusory realm], *Shint'aeyang*, January 1957, 50.
[51] G.C. Peden, "Suez and Britain's Decline as a World Power," *The Historical Journal,* Cambridge University Press 55, no 4 (December, 2012), 1073-1096.

CHAPTER 1

Life on the Street: Fact and Fiction in the Urban Mapping of *Saenghwal*

> "When I'm bored and solitude seeps in, I get up and go out the door. I enjoy walking midst the throng, people rubbing against one another walking to and fro. They go around in white shirts, without jackets. I want to walk alongside them, brush against their skin.
>
> During the Japanese occupation, we always kept our jackets and hats on no matter how hot it got. Is this a symbol of freedom of the body that's come with liberation?
>
> At every shop, luxury items tempt the eyes of passersby."
>
> —Kim Kwangsik, from "Fantaisie-Impromptu," *Sasanggye* (1954)[1]

> "These days, it's common to spot advertising and dozens of images on display in the streets. These images, strictly speaking, can't be considered 'picture theater,' but if we consider how they bring pedestrians to a stop, how some gather and look on with interest, we can surmise the magnitude of their influence."
>
> —Kim Kisŏ, from "Slide Projection and Education," *Saegyoyuk* (1956)[2]

In the December 1952 issue of *Shint'aeyang*, cartoonist Kim Sŏnghwan published a set of illustrations under the heading of "The Modernology of Women in Three Cities in Wartime." Kim focused on three types of women—a down-and-out middle-aged refugee from Seoul, a smartly dressed pair of "extravagant type" in Pusan, and a "refugee type" of women in Taegu, diligently knitting and peddling goods to make ends meet—each illustration accompanied by a caption, providing situational context as well as commentary tinged with sentimentality or criticism. The refugee woman from Seoul is said to be "enduring the negative seven degrees cold" while waiting patiently to return to the capital. The "facial expressions of" women from Pusan, meanwhile, with their "cutting edge 'new look' (*nyu'ruk*)," are nonetheless laden with "sorrow," because as citizens of a provisional capital, their everyday lives (*saenghwal*) cannot

[1] Kim Kwangsik, "Hwansanggok," [Fantaisie-Impromptu], *Sasanggye,* no. 15, October 1954, 161.
[2] Kim Kisŏ, "Slide Projection and Education," *Saegyoyuk* [new education], October 1956, 68-69.

attain "deep-rootedness."[3] These illustrations, then, by focusing on female social types during wartime, seemed almost ineluctably to cross over to observations about broader socio-historical conditions and their effect on the everyday lives of ordinary citizens.

That the leap is deliberate is evidenced by Kim's use of the rather abstruse word "modernology." Within the context of its original Japanese coinage, "modernology" (*kōgengaku*) was a method of urban investigation first practiced by Kon Wajirō and Yoshida Kenkichi, who sought to "attune themselves to every new detail of street life that could be recorded, sketched, or enumerated" as the city was being rebuilt in the wake of the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake.[4] Kon famously characterized it as a "scientific method," ethnographic in nature, but distinct from anthropology in that it focused on observing the "everyday practices (*seikatsu*)" of modern-day people.[5] The term "modernology" entered the Korean peninsula most notably through the works of writer Pak T'aewŏn, who appropriated its observational techniques for his flâneur-driven novella *A Day in the Life of Novelist Kubo* (1934).[6] But when considering Kon and Yoshida's original deployment of modernology to track "every new detail of street life" in the aftermath of cataclysmic urban destruction, we may find Kim's 1952 wartime appropriation even more apt. The term's re-appearance in the editorial cartoon was emblematic of a growing appetite for modes of observing, recording and disseminating socially significant information during a time of mass displacement, intense precarity, and economic and political uncertainty.

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[3] The refugees women in Taegu, speaking dialects from "different parts," manage to tug the heartstrings of even the most "conservative" and "close-minded" local women with their lively vigor, offering with their very presence the "discovery" of a "refreshing beauty of everyday life *(saenghwal*)."

[4] Jordan Sand, *Tokyo Vernacular: Common Spaces, Local Histories, Found Objects* (Berkeley: University of California, 2013), 100.

[5] Miriam Silverberg, "Constructing the Japanese Ethnography of Modernity," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 51, no. 1 (Feb. 1992): 36.

[6] For more on Pak's encounter with the theory of modernology, see Kim Hŭngsik, "Pakt'aewŏnŭi sosŏlgwa kohyŏnhak" [The fiction of Pak T'aewŏn and modernologio], *Han'guk'yŏndaemunhakyŏn'gu* [The journal of Korean modern literature 18] (December 2005), 327-358.

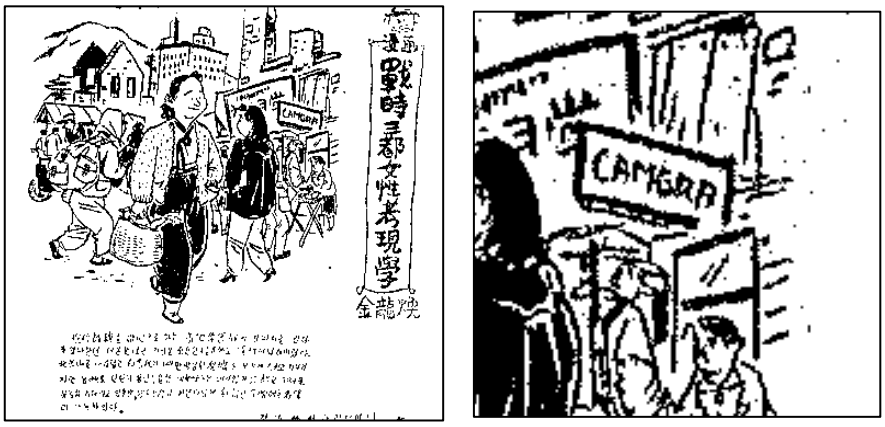

Figure 6. Intermedial reflexivity across comics and street photography
Source: Kim Sŏnghwan, "The Modernology of Women in Three Cities in Wartime," *Shint'aeyang* (December 1952).

From the years immediately following Korea's liberation from Japan's colonial rule to the turbulent and destructive years of the Korean War and the subsequent years of reconstruction (*chaegŏn*) in South Korea, such an appetite manifested itself across different media.[7] In addition to the invocation of the legacy of 1930s literary modernism through the term "modernology," we can see in the background of one of Kim Sŏnghwan's illustrations a glimpse of an homage to another medium of social documentation—photography—in the form of a signboard of a camera shop (i.e. "CAMERA"), its significance implied by being the only piece of clearly legible text within the illustration's diegetic field [Figure 6]. It is an instance of *intermedial reflexivity*, a moment when the content of a medium self-consciously references another medium that it is collaborating with or competing against within the broader cultural field particularly in service of shared social goals and audience desires. We see this reflexivity in the composition of Kim's illustration as well: deviating from the usual technique of placing his figures of caricature within a flattened two-dimensional space, Kim situated his subjects within a three-dimensional

[7] Kim Yonghwan's illustration "Rough Sketch in the Streets," is a slightly earlier example of a cartoon that catalogues social types that can be found in the streets. Kim introduces the literati, the politician, the opportunist and "the refugees," who are described with varying degrees of pity, amusement and disdain. See Kim Yonghwan, "Rough Sketch in the Streets," *Taejo,* December 1948, 94-95.

composition that attempted to produce a more "realistic" illusionistic space resembling works of street photography, simulating what it would be like to encounter one of these women in the streets of Pusan or Taegu. While Kim's recognition of the affinity between caricature and photography is not especially surprising,[8] what does deserve our attention is the recurrence of this reflexive relationship across multiple media and genres of representations during this period, organized around and gravitating towards the changing urban streetscape.

I argue in this chapter that after Korea's liberation from Japan, the urban streetscape was restored as a privileged epistemological space for representing *saenghwal* ("everyday life" or "way of life")[9] and for tracking the historical reality of Korea's transition from Japanese colonial occupation to a position of semi-sovereignty vis-à-vis the United States. What emerged collectively through the intermedial maps of illustrations, reportage, documentary and artistic photography, and literary fiction was a picture of ordinary South Koreans living in a precarious state of compromised mobility, security and autonomy, with a particular emphasis on the increasingly problematized relationship between the body, commodity forms, and the image. Reading across different media and genres is crucial for teasing out the intermedial reality of *saenghwal* in the postwar-1950s and for understanding the degree to which foreign media and the commodity form were perceived to be an agent of danger, distraction, and cultural contamination for some, while a source of invigoration, refuge and escapist fantasy for others.

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[8] For more on caricature and photography's "peculiarly incestuous relationship during the years after the introduction of the collodion-on-glass negative process in 1851," see Anne McCauley, "Caricature and Photography in Second Empire Paris," *Art Journal* 43, no. 4, (1983): 355.

[9] While the notion of *saenghwal* had been a crucial index for national and self reconstruction for intellectuals in the first decades of the twentieth century and found articulation among leftist thinkers from the mid-1920s to mid-1930s as an experiential basis for socialist enlightenment, the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War led to intensification of state censorship and totalizing control of the cultural field; the concept of saenghwal , as a result, was stripped of its subversive political potential. Writers of formerly leftist orientation, for example, turned inwards, framing the discourse of saenghwal within the confines of self-consciously artistic interiority or responsible domestic management, so that *saenghwal* became a privatized and de-politicized concept in the literary field. Within the realm of artistic photography, meanwhile, the dominant mode of representation was called "salon-style" (*sallon sajin*), which privileged the heavily aestheticized, technically well-made picture over photographs that engaged with social or political reality. See Chapter 2 for more on *sallon sajin*.

The consciousness of this capitalist problematic was particularly acute within the context of the post-colonial/ postwar project of reconstruction in which the South Korean economy was primarily reliant on U.S. aid for survival. Examining visual and literary productions together also allows us to recognize the literary and photographic act of mapping everyday visuality for circulation as both socially constructive and critical acts; while situating the audience in a shared social world, it simultaneously made the urban reality of postwar South Korea available for contemplation and critique.

I begin the chapter by discussing the post-liberation emergence of a genre of what I call "streetscape-reportage," which focused on a single observer's walking tour through Seoul. This type of flâneur-driven narratives employed illustrations and stylized, metaphorically-rich prose to convey in concrete, sensorial detail the changing conditions of the city in the post-liberation and post-Korean War years. My discussion shifts then to photography. In the mid-1950s, the genre of the streetscape-reportage faded away, supplanted by images of street photography in magazine pictorials, galvanized by the burgeoning movement of "everyday-life realism" (*saenghwalchuŭi riŏllijŭm*), which was championed by photographer and critic Im Ŭngsik. Furthermore, general-interest magazines in the mid to late 1950s, which published illustrations, photographs and reportage articles in mixed deployment of the visual and the verbal, played an important role in synthesizing new hybrid genres (e.g. "cameral novel") from existing representational formats. Photographic realism's attraction to public sites of social and commercial exchange such as alleyways, streets, train stations, and outdoor markets meant the camera eye eventually turned to representing the influx of commodities and foreign media as composite images: mannequins donning the newest fashion behind window displays, movie posters on walls, boxes of cigarettes laid out meticulously on a street vendor's tray (a cartoon

precursor of which we see in Kim Sŏnghwan's 1952 illustrations). In the photography of Han Yŏngsu, foreign commodities and media are reduced to the surface logic of the image and rendered in ironic suspension vis-à-vis Han's human subjects. What emerges collectively, then, from this intermedial exploration of reportage, photography, and fantasy, is a picture of everyday negotiations between the mobility of foreign commodities. Finally, I turn to ways in which the visuality of urban *saenghwal* imagined and imaged "foreign" bodies and their reciprocating gazes in photography, reportage, human-interest stories, and fiction.

Flâneur as Post-colonial Realist: Streetscape-Reportage in Post-liberation South Korea[10]

Streetscape-reportage[11] of post-liberation period owed a debt to both the fragmented, sensorially rich aesthetics of literary modernism and the socially engaged documentary ethos of realism from the Japanese colonial period. They were also shaped by extra-literary conditions of their time: the popularization of rumor and first-person chronicles in the mediascape of the politically tumultuous period following liberation[12]; the increased migration to Seoul and the appetite for information about its constituents; and the desire to see vivid representations of the confusion, squalor and dynamism of continually evolving cityscapes, the disparities of wealth; the co-existence of reconstruction and decay reflected in images and texts. Far from being a haphazard stitching together of superficial impressions and fleeting thoughts, streetscape-reportage shared one of the defining elements of literary realism, which was to draw from the interplay between the visible and the invisible to suggest the existence of a structuring historical

[10] In this chapter and throughout the dissertation, I refer to the period following August 15, 1945 as "post-liberation" and the period following the Korean War as "postwar."
[11] "Streetscape-reportage" is my coinage, "streetscape" chosen to highlight the consciously aestheticized pictorial aspect (as in the genre of landscape paintings) and "reportage" meant to underscore the social documentary dimension. The term "streetscape" is also my translation and appropriation of a term used in the magazine *Shinch'ŏnji*, which labeled its urban scenes "*kadup'unggyŏng*" (街頭風景).
[12] Jiyoung Shin, "Liberation-Period Media: Hearsay as Reportage," (paper presented at the Association of Asian Studies Conference, Chicago, Illinois, March 2015).

reality that cannot be discerned by an untrained eye, a reality rife with problems and contradictions that awaited transformation.

The desire for streetscape-reportage produced an array of examples. Some were a compilation of miscellaneous "tips" from the streets. Some appeared as a mix of illustrations and narrative account of a flâneur as he walked from one part of the city to another. These forms decreased in frequency in the mid-1950s, when black-and-white pictorials began to appear more regularly in general-interest magazines: some were photojournalistic; some seemed to capture a slice-of-life; some were aerial views of the city; some portrayed landscapes and the countryside in a contemplative and timeless fashion; some were run-of-the-mill tourist photos from other countries. The popularization of these pictorials meant that photography became the authoritative method by which life on the street would be represented. It was the promise of referential objectivity and its access to truth, distributed across a broader audience of readers, that was transformative.

As a genre, streetscape-reportage emerged as a versatile medium within the context of political turmoil, social anxiety, and geopolitical upheaval on the Korean peninsula following the collapse of the Japanese Empire and the devastation of the Korean War. These pieces combined narrative, slice-of-life, lists and illustrations, functioning as an amalgam of reportage, walking-tour, local ethnography, and a contemporary record of evolving everyday street culture. They staged a mix of familiar scenes from well-traveled sections of the city and titillating glimpses from spaces of scandal. They provided a rich hodge-podge of facts, factoids, anecdotes, histories, secrets, tips, rumors, musings, fantasies and dreams. They functioned, in part, as a platform for broader social commentary and critique. By providing a guided tour of the changing Seoul streets, the authors of these articles invited readers to a curated vision of the city, rendering the

fractured urban experience as a form of organized exhibition. They simultaneously suggested the possibility of a shared "structure of feeling" without eliding the individualist subjectivity of the flâneur.

Figure 7. Image-text in the form of streetscape-reportage.
Source: Kim Ŭihwan, "Walking around Seoul," *Choun* (December 1949).

A number of streetscape-reportage narratives provided a walking-tour around Seoul. [13] These accounts paid special attention to the sight of foreign commodities and material reminders of the colonial past, especially in the streets of Ch'ungmuro, where the Japanese enclave was located during the colonial occupation. In "Walking around Seoul" (1949), Hong remarks on the noticeable absence of the sounds of the *geta* (Japanese wooden sandals) in the streets, asking, "Is this because Honmachi has changed to Ch'ungmuro?" [Figure 7]. The Japanese products still in the shop windows continue to display Japan's lingering power, while the deluge of American products show that U.S. is the new regional hegemon. Interestingly, both "Impressions from the Streets" (1950) and "Streetscapes" (1950) employ the metaphor of soundscape to describe the change of Seoul's streets, describing the sensory experience of Ch'ungmuro in terms of

[13] Kim Uihwan (illustrator) and Hong Yŏngmo (writer), "Walking around Seoul," *Choun,* December 1949, 84-85; Song Pyŏngdong, "Impressions from the Streets," *Shinch'ŏnji*, February1950, 176-181; Im Tong'ŭn, "Streetscapes: Rambling Talk on Ch'ungmuro," *Shinch'ŏnji*, April 1950, 206; Chang Ukjin (illustrator) O Sin (writer), "Seoul's Changing Sights," *Shinch'ŏnji*, April 1954, 134-140.

"harmony" and "symphony." Song calls it "the outpouring" of "a new symphonic design" while Im writes, "There's a terminology in music called 'disharmony.' I wonder if Ch'ungmuro isn't indeed a place of disharmony." Since disharmony can produce "astonishingly beautiful effects as we see in modern music," the question becomes "is Ch'ungmuro indeed a place of 'harmonious discord'?" Leaving the question unanswered, Im shares his displeasure with Chinese-character signs for "sushi" and "yakitori" calling them "grotesque" and laments that the mere sight of these signs call up the "sounds of *geta*" (which is also a source of Hong's complaint) and the "disgusting smell of tea." In other words, walking through Ch'ungmuro was a synesthetic experience. A glimpse of a Japanese-language signboard was enough to trigger a sensorially vivid recall of the colonial past, disrupting one's spatio-temporal orientation within the post-colonial present.

Im observes, despairingly, that as more and more upscale Korean restaurants become visible, the beggars on the streets only seem to increase in number; this is also a "disharmony" which will turn into "noise, static." The metaphorical logic of "harmony" and "disharmony" functions to weed out what is desirable. ("There are harmonies that fit," Song writes, "as well as notes of discord that do not belong.") It also points to an unfolding structuring totality. The opposition between "disharmony" and "noise, static" hinges on the difference between what is legible and illegible within that totality. While the latter points to the collapse of society, which is a loss of totality, the former suggests that one is still participating in a larger totality, and furthermore, that this totality can be glimpsed by becoming an attentive observer of the streets.

The suggestion of a complicated totality also allows the author to position himself as a legitimate curator of these urban sights and sounds that make up the complex sensorial system.[14]

[14] Far from being a disembodied "eye"—or an impersonal camera that merely records—Song appeals to the sympathy of the reader with lines such as, "Even if I want to ride in a car, I don't have the money for it; if I'm going

He stitches together fragmented images and scenes to produce a narrative whole. In "Impressions from the Streets," Song freely privileges certain sites over others. For example, the shop windows of Ch'ungmuro are said to be "chock full of merchandise that are not particularly important to our *saenghwal*." Around Chayu Market and the PX, "profiteers who eat away at our nation's progress roam the streets" while "women peddle makeup to customers shopping for extravagant items." By contrast, Namdaemun and Tongdaemun markets are filled with "necessities for *saenghwal*." He singles out the fish market and the image of women negotiating the price of fish to be "beautiful and picturesque" comparing it to a "flower blooming in mud." He also sees a glimpse of a more egalitarian gender relations in the sight of these motivated women who are fending for themselves to feed their families: "It is a good thing that the person who cooks does the negotiating herself...we might say that in forty years or so, we will see men going around shopping for fish while women go out to work." Song goes on to articulate the relationship between domestic consumption, *saenghwal*, South Korea's future as a sovereign nation. The comment is sparked by a rumor (heard, presumably, on the streets) and the sight of the foreign products in display windows.

> The rumor that the Japanese Empire will rise again is indeed frightening, a news that will make you tremble… Even if we must increase production of coal and food stuff in the countryside and put off making cars and airplanes in the industrial zones till a later decade, we should produce clothing and daily necessities so that they exceed the number of foreign merchandise in the show windows.[15]

Song firmly links everyday practices of personal consumption and the future of South Korea as a sovereign nation.

O's "Seoul's Changing Sights" deserves special attention in that it is published after the Korean War and is accompanied by the art of Chang Ukjin, who is remembered today primarily

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somewhere nearby, it's probably more comfortable for me to walk." Here he presents himself as an everyman, describing the streets as most ordinary citizens would encounter them as pedestrians.

[15] Song, "Impressions from the Streets," 181.

for his abstract illustrations of everyday life. The drawing that appears over the headline is a disembodied head in profile, the eyes forward. The floating head functions as a quasi-avatar, as the reader can simulate a stroll through the streets by gliding laterally across the pages, from right to left, as we encounter Chang's other drawings, which characteristically emphasize flatness over depth. The readers are led from Seoul Station through Chongno, Myŏngdong, Namdaemun, Ch'ŏnggyech'ŏn. A helicopter is seen flying over Sejongno (called "dragonfly airplane" by children). The *Tonga Ilbo* and *Chosŏn Ilbo* buildings stand unscathed by the war, but the surface of the capitol building is still scarred by artillery fire. The Tonghwa department store has been turned into a PX. "There are soldiers from all over," he writes, "so that the impression is that of a racial exhibition. The dwarf soldier from Turkey. The British soldier in a beret. The black soldier who still has a look of adolescence. The extravagant French soldier." The specificity of the characterization that go beyond stereotype lends vividness to the rendering.

While these narratives unfold under the conceit of a walking tour, it actually deploys perspectives that provide privileged glimpses of interiors. When applied to the fake souvenir shops that provide sexual entertainment to soldiers, the exposé provides voyeuristic pleasure for the readers.[16] "On the outside," O writes, "there are splendid souvenir dolls, but once you enter, there are Carmen-like dolls…their lips painted with pink lipstick, cheeks glowing in splendid shades…women are laughing like canaries…" The interplay of the visible and the invisible is not simply incidental to sites of sex work, but is built structurally into the experience of the city. Even as the narrative simulates the glide across town, allowing reminders of devastation to slip out of view, the narrator imposes an order, explaining how the pieces fit together: first the "racial exhibition of soldiers" then the "fake souvenir shops" and then Anikdong, where there is,

[16] According to Chang Sejin, the so-called Western princess, or *yanggongju*, served as an embodiment of all the negative sentiments regarding the U.S. military base. For her, camp town narratives are means of rediscovering U.S. soldiers as occupiers. See Chang Sejin, *Imagined America* (Sŏul-si: P'urŭnyŏksa, 2012).

"demilitarization of sexuality" and supposedly illegal sex work continues in an organized fashion. This is called "a world of extraterritoriality."

Figure 8. The end of the tour.
Source: Chang Ukjin, "Seoul's Changing Sights," *Shinch'ŏnji* (April 1954).

The final destination of the tour, not coincidentally, is Tongdaemun, where an English-sign "East Gate" hangs [Figure 8]. The area functions as an airport for the Army. "It was a race course, originally—the area is supposed to be for horses, but now there are planes," he writes, "This is 'the wheel of history.' Where they used to sell entrance tickets for customers, there is a MP standing guard, and to the northwest of the racetracks, you see Wangshimni, which is a shantytown." Chang's illustration for the narrative's concluding page stages a perspectival shift. While the previous drawings are oriented to emphasize sideway movement, to facilitate a smooth glide from right-to-left—the final drawing is more confrontational: a dead-end. The MP, the barricade, and the helicopter, are arranged in a way to enact a barrier, and to bring the "walking tour" to a stop.

While streetscape-reportage pieced together urban scenes to situate fleeting everyday moments within a broader historical reality, it also inevitably draws attention to sites that demobilized the subjectivity of the flâneur. There are places where you cannot enter, state-of-affairs you are forbidden from seeing with your own eyes and render into representation. In the

case of the final stop in O's "Seoul's Changing Sights," the "crisis of representation" is not caused by a problem of aesthetics or epistemology but by a geopolitical reality of semi-sovereignty.

In the mid to late 1950s, the genre of streetscape-reportage fell out of currency with the emergence of photography as the dominant method for visualizing and disseminating representations of street life in magazines. This evolution in streetscape representation was importantly galvanized by a movement in artistic photography called "everyday-life realism," which is the focus of the next section.

Realist Photography: from Labor/Production to Commodity/Exchange

Im Ŭngsik, often credited as the pioneer of "everyday-life realism," clearly distinguished between "everyday-life realism" and "salon-style" photography of the colonial-period era. While the former focused on concrete details of the lives of ordinary people engaging in work, leisure and family life, the latter, according to Im's critique, had indulged in pictorialist aestheticism and idealized forms that produced pictures divorced from everyday reality. The salon-style photography, furthermore, was linked to the legacy of the Japanese occupation, so that 1950s realism came to stand for construction of a post-colonial era of photographic culture, one with its own philosophy of autonomous subjectivity and social engagement. In his article "Victory of Everyday-Life Realism" Im writes,

> The ideological issue is most important for the progress of photography as an art form. The photos of the past were *positioned alongside tonal richness and life of consumption* (*sobi saenghwal*) *and had nothing to do with everyday feelings* (*saenghwal kamjŏng*) *of the people* (*minjung,* 民衆),[17] and had no ability to confront reality as is and lacked any fresh sensibility and was simply intoxicated by an abstract, idealized beauty of nature… And for the young generation who is feeling the breath of a vibrant new era after experiencing the agonizing ordeal of the Korean War, *they came to see and contemplate*

[17] For a more thorough discussion of the discourse of *saenghwal kamjŏng,* see Chapter 4.

> *all objects realistically, so that even in photographic expression,* worked hard to produce fresh and vivid fragments from within everyday life (*saenghwalnaebu*), and were able to focus their energies on *objectively describing social phenomena* and *capturing the momentary truths of human existence*.[18] (emphasis added)

Im Ŭngsik, like many notable critics and intellectuals of this time, saw in the material and spiritual devastation of the Korean War an opportunity for reconstruction and rebirth. Months after the Korean War broke out, Im was dispatched as an embedded photographer with the military by the United States Information Service and documented the Incheon Landing and the retaking of Seoul.[19] His wartime experience was formative. "[I realized] a work of photography is not simply an expression of beauty," he writes in his memoir, "Whether a subject is beautiful, ugly or cruel, they are all valid subjects of photography…I call this *everyday-life realism*."[20] For him, what he earnestly remembers as "the birth pangs of revolution in my philosophy of photography" was not a singular experience but generational. Something seems to have been transformed in both the eyes and mind of the younger generation because of the war that shifted their attention to seeing things "realistically."

In addition to Im's own claims of wartime documentary photography having played a formative role in the development of "everyday-life realism," we may understand the concept (and the movement of photographic realism mobilized around it) as having been more broadly constituted by two axes of influence. The first is transnational and synchronic and formed through the continuing influx of Japanese magazines on photography, such as *Asahi Camera*.[21] [Figure 9].

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[18] Im Ŭngsik, "Saenghwalchuŭi sajin-ŭi sŭngni" [victory of photography in the mode of everyday-life realism], *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*, December 19-20,1956.
[19] Im Ŭngsik, *Naegagŏrŏon han'guksadan* [the road I've taken in South Korean photography], (Sŏul-si: Nunpit, 1999), 82-83.
[20] Ibid., 138.
[21] Ibid., 276.

Figure 9. Intermedial reflexivity as a citational "nod" to the influence of Japanese photography (in the form of the magazine Asahi Camera*) as a condition of production.*
Source: Han Yŏngsu, *Seoul, Modern Times*, (Sŏul-si: Han's Graphic, 2014), 63.

Scholar Pak Chusŏk characterizes the background of the emergence of 1950s South Korean realism as having been shaped, in part, "fundamentally by the formation of a photographic perspective based in Japanese photography and its socialist realism."[22] While Im urged Korean photographers not to "uncritically copy" the "so-called socialist realism" from Japan in the November 16, 1955 issue of *Chosŏn Ilbo*, the very need for his caution seemed to suggest a broader climate of Japanese photographic influence. Even the above-mentioned phrase "Victory of Everyday Life Realism" echoes Japanese photographer Domon Ken's earlier declaration ("It is not an exaggeration to call 1953 the victory year for *rearizumu*."[23]). Yet, in spite of these affinities, just as Julia Adeney Thomas emphasizes the need to assess Japanese post-1945 photography outside of "powerful [contemporaneous] American paradigms" in order to "jettison received categories, defamiliarize the [Japanese] pictures, and, most especially, recover the

[22] Pak Chusŏk, "1950nyŏndae hanguksajin'gwa In'gangajokjŏn" [1950s South Korean photography and "The Family of Man"], *Hangukgŭnhyŏndae misulsahak* 14 [Journal of Korean modern and contemporary art history], (August 2005), 47.
[23] Domon Ken, "Rearizumu wa shizenshugi de wa nai" [Realism is not naturalism]. *Camera* 46. no. 6, 174-177, quoted in Julia Adeney Thomas, "Power Made Visible: Photography and Postwar Japan's Elusive Reality," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67, no. 2 (May, 2008), 371.

discursive practice that gave them significance,[24] I will show that the expressions of postwar realism in South Korea are best evaluated on their own terms of discursive, historical negotiations that were post-colonial and, at times, self-consciously intermedial.[25]

The second axis of influence was more indigenous and diachronic. While a thorough understanding of the evolving complexity of the term *saenghwal* would take us back to the 1920s, 1930s, and the 1940s under Japanese colonial rule, for the purposes of this chapter, it suffices to trace the earliest example of South Korea's photographic realism and its engagement with *saenghwal* to another Im. Just two days after the formal establishment of Republic of South Korea, photographer Im Sŏkche's solo exhibition of about fifty photographs was held at the Tonghwa Department store, sponsored by Seoul Times. In the pamphlet of the exhibition, Yi T'aeŭng writes, "After August 15th [1945], the artistic consciousness of photographers and their efforts towards a new direction were fierce. Their conscience as artists had been awaken to the necessity of discovering the 'genre' of artistic photography grounded in proper national art that bravely rejects the vague definition of the art of photography left by Imperial Japan of the past." He goes on to say, "[we see in his work] the struggle and will to escape the past's tendency towards a *delicate, sensuous and romantic mood* to arrive at an *upright and practical realism*. (emphasis added)" [26]

[24] Thomas, "Power Made Visible," 368.
[25] Thomas concludes in her article that "Japanese realism was not ideologically coherent," after teasing out three strands: Tanaka Masao's "socialism with its insistence on historical determinants of poverty," Watanabe Kosho's "liberal democratic pragmatism," and Domon Ken's "sentimental nationalism," with Domon's "sentimental nationalism" achieving eventual dominance. Thomas, "Power Made Visible," 392.
[26] Cited in Chŏng Chaeho's "1950nyŏndae han'guk sajine kwanhan koch'al" [investigation of 1950s South Korean photography] (Masters thesis, Kyŏngsŏng University, 1998), 44.

Figure 10. Im Sŏkche, "Loading and Unloading" (1948) & "Miners" (1952).

The effects of Im Sŏkche's work [Figure 10] are all the more clearly visible in the comments of leftist literary critic Kim Tongsŏk, who praises Im for his objective realism and historical engagement.[27] "[Im] captured the reality of Southern Chosŏn [i.e. southern Korea] exactly as it is and I'm not the only one surprised by its lofty artistry," he writes. For Kim, the consequence of such a realist expression exceeds the realm of photography. For example, he attacks the painting of Yi K'waedae whose paintings feature characters "who look like works of Raphael in Chosŏn garb." These characters, Kim goes on to say, exist in "Yi's subjectivity" rather than Chosŏn's reality (*hyŏnsil*). Yet Kim is careful to differentiate between different modes of photography by claiming that not all photographs are "realistic"; his definition of realism is rooted in historical materialism. Since history is that which "progresses," one of the fundamental problems of photography is that it must express history's movement through its stillness.

What is perhaps most remarkable about Kim Tongsŏk's commentary is how he compensates for the photographic medium's innate lack of motion. Through ekphrasis (graphic, dramatic description) he endows the photographic work a sense of movement and, through it, the

[27] Kim, Tongsŏk, *Chosŏnjungang Ilbo*, August 11, 1948.

quality of transformation in process. "Let us take the work 'Fence' as an example," he writes. "The children are under a tall fence. The fence may be tall now, but it will wear down and the children who are short now will grow tall…The day will come when we can leap over the fence to welcome a new era." Ironically, what provides movement, dynamism, and a sense of purpose to these "realistic" photographs is what is *not* visibly present in them (i.e. a future implied in the photograph), and the ability of the viewer—Kim Tongsŏk—to project a narrative. In his response to "The One Who Pulls," which depicts a rickshaw driver pulling a customer, Kim sees a "clear sense of historical consciousness." Who is the one pulling the cart of history? Not only can realistic photography—through its technique of selective framing—picture historical progress and unveil its underlying process from a state of obfuscation, it can also prime one's critical responsiveness through a photographic mode of questioning.

While Im Ŭngsik's articulation of everyday realism in the 1950s rarely underscored the importance of capturing historical reality,[28] his colleague and contemporary Ku Wangsam (1909-1977) continued to emphasize the crucial relationship between photography and historical engagement in the same vein as Im Sŏkche and Kim Tongsŏk. Even when writing within an anti-communist climate, Ku's words are startlingly confrontational.[29] "Realist photography," he claims, "is at once a revolution in the physiology of vision and calls for a high-level meditation and technical handling. The realist artist is, at once, a critic of society and a historian of social

[28] Indeed, critic and photographer Ch'oe Pongnim claims that Im Ŭngsik's's term "everyday-life realism" was consciously measured to distance himself from "socialist realism." Ch'oe quotes Im from a November 16, 1955 article in *Chosŏn Ilbo*, who, while encouraging South Korean photographers to engage with photographers all over the world to "investigate photographic realism," dissuaded them from "uncritically copying" the "so-called socialist realism" that is becoming prevalent in Japan. This position is articulated, Im says, "from an ethnonational (*minjokjŏk*) standpoint." For Ch'oe, then, Im's realism is inexorably a product of the Cold War order. See Ch'oe Pongnim, "Im Ŭngsik-ŭi 'saenghwalchuŭi sajin' chaego" [reconsideration of Im Ŭngsik's everyday-life photography], *Photography & Culture* 8 (Dec. 2014), 5.

[29] It is worth noting that Ku also shies away from the term "socialist realism," as observed in his description of Im Sŏkche's work, "While some commentators have called his work 'socialist realist,' but what is notable about his work in comparison to photographs of before is that it shifts one's gaze to the lives of the masses (*minjung*) and their everyday life." See Ku Wangsam, *Sajinyesul* (Sŏul-si: Taehansajinmunhwasa, 1966), 40.

history, and a warrior in the culture war of photography (*sajinmunhwajŏnsa*)." Ku's formulation of realist photography was post-colonial in orientation in that he called for a "guiding theory" that would allow South Korean photography to overcome its "Japanese vestiges." It was humanist in that he desired "lively portraits that are truthful about the investigation of humanity." It was historically engaged in that he wished for "not a superficial duplication of reality but accurate and concrete capturing of historical content." It was inextricably concerned with matters of everyday life in that "[it should] express social phenomenon that is in intimate contact with dynamic and organic *saenghwal*." It was technologically situated in that Ku saw "the nature of photographic arts" as being "based in the sciences and from start to finish a mechanistic art."[30]

Compared to the above-mentioned commentators, Ku's position achieves greater nuance in his consideration of photography as an art among a range of art forms. This is partly because he is informed by photography's technological specificity vis-à-vis the other artistic media. For example, he writes (in contrast to what is implied in Kim Tongsŏk's praise of Im Sŏkche), "While literature has ways of expressing that transcends time and space and can psychologically pursue the metaphysical realm, photographs are incomplete forms of expression in that they are simply fragments and on this limited page, it is impossible to express a concrete and overarching ideology." Yet this weakness when it comes to dealing with abstraction is precisely what allows it to capture the concreteness of everyday life so faithfully. Indeed the very nature of photography, according to Ku, is to provide "a sculpted record that describes honestly and realistically the objective, natural phenomenon and human *saenghwal*." By this logic,

[30] Here, Ku elaborates on the distinction between the motive of realism and salon-style photography: a. "To depart from setting down on the photographic paper an emotional feeling, the form and beauty of nature, to capture the nature that is linked with *saenghwal* and where *saegnmyong* is flowing, capture"; b. "Not a portraiture of the surface (the forms of the outside) but photography that investigates man, that produce a truthful and animated..." c. "Not a superficial duplication of reality, but describes accurately and concretely the historical content and expressing the social phenomenon that is intimately connected with dynamic and organic saenghwal." See Ku Wangsam, "Photography's Realism Problem," *Tonga Ilbo*, February 17, 1955.

photographs that reach for abstractions—as in the case of salon-style photography which was en vogue during the colonial period and continued to be practiced, marginalized, through the 1950s—have lost "the purity of photography" and end up indulging in "trivial impressionism."[31]

Less than three years after "The Path of Realist Photography," Ku began to betray some signs of uncertainty regarding the program of realism. In "Photography's Originality and Artistry: Entering International Salons and Our Attitude,"[32] he declared,

> The moment of realism—snap, chance, camera position—has passed… From the perspective of world photography…we might say that the period of profiting from the methodology of the snap has passed us by. It is passé. Now, photography must contain everything from ideological quality to psychological expression that is directly connected to the photographer's own subjectivity. The period is calling for *photographs that bear the unique fragrance of the juices that flow from deep within the photographer's own constitution* (*chejil*). (emphasis added)

What is underscored in this description is the camera as an organic rather than a mechanical extension of the photographer's body and interiority. Whereas before, Ku sought to bring together the human, the objective realm and *saenghwal* as the essential subject of photographic inquiry (positioning photography alongside science and literature), Ku gives articulation to thinking of the artistic photograph primarily as an *expressive surface*. Rather than a precise trace of the external world, it exists mainly as evidence of a photographer's unique perspective as an artist. To be sure, Ku's agenda in the article is not to do away with realist photography in order to meet these international trends. On the contrary, he firmly declares, "before our artistic photography enters the international arena, we must establish the concepts about artistic attitude

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[31] Somewhat paradoxically, Ku claims in an article few months later that realism is not photography's "only path and not an internal logic."[31] "The critical methodology of realism is the result of thinking through what ought to be done with one's sincere love of photography as we live within our present reality of 1955." He goes on to say, "We must give our attention to the environment most appropriate to our times (radiation, way of *saenghwal*, nylon, vinyl)." Ku is interested in articulating the material support of photography's technology and highlighting its potential, but he also wants to historically situate this potential. He is not as certain, for example, "whether a life oriented towards progress can be as convincingly argued in 2055." See Ku Wangsam, "The Path of Realist Photography," *Maeil Shinmun*, October 16, 1955.

[32] Ku Wangsam, "Photography's Originality and Artistry," *Tonga Ilbo*, March 15, 1958.

and value regarding [Korean] photography, and reflect on whether we have decided what our attitude vis-à-vis the international arena." Yet he is less firm about how this can be achieved and admits that "the realistic conditions of our culture of photography is such that we are not equipped with the power or the requisite qualities to handle this issue." The urgency of realism as a photographic art form gives way to the urgency of the realistic conditions of photography as an artistic field.

The idealized imperatives of realist photography sketched above by Ku begins to be compromised. The desire to produce historically engaged realist photography was concurrently a desire to elevate photography to the realm of serious art, alongside literature, painting, and music. This implicated the critics of photography in the contradictory logic of post-colonial construction of culture, which was endemic across all fields of artistic production in South Korea—the desire to produce a "new" national culture existing in tension with the need to meet a standard worthy of recognition and approval by "more advanced" nations. One prime venue for this kind of recognition was international salon competitions. Because as a representational format, photography relied less on linguistic and cultural specificity as national literature and cinema did, it availed itself to global circulation more readily, and therefore, was actually more adept at internalizing its styles, modes, and influences.

My emphasis on the critical discourse of photographic realism is not to argue how some photographs of this period were more "realistic" than others, or even that these critics were influential in producing stylistically realistic photographs, but to show how, from Kim Tongsŏk in the late-1940s to Ku Wangsam in the late-1950s, the critical analysis of realism always seemed to entail a discussion about the interplay between the visible and in the invisible; even when the indexical faithfulness of the camera was acknowledged, the strength of a realist

photographs relied on capturing something that was not explicitly visible. For Kim Tongsŏk (in his analysis of Im Sŏkche), it was the historical potentiality latent in the physicality of the figures depicted, through the intimation of movement and, consequently, transformation. For Im Ŭngsik, it was "the everyday feelings of the people" and vivid glimpses of that which lay "within everyday life" (*saenghwalnaebu*). For Ku Wangsam, it was "not a portraiture of the surface…but photography that investigates man," an accurate description of "historical content" and "social phenomenon" that was not merely a "superficial duplication," but something that was "intimately connected with dynamic and organic *saenghwal*." What this shows is that within the discursive logic of realism, the semiotics of the surface was bracketing the indexical potential of the camera technology in order to underscore the surface's ability to metonymically or metaphorically point towards a larger unseeable whole—whether this whole was history, humanity, the everyday feelings of the people, or organic *saenghwal*. We see a marked shift in this attitude in the late-1950s when Ku begins to write about how the period is calling for "photographs that bear the unique fragrance" that flow from "deep within the photographer's own constitution." The surface of artistic photography begins to refer to the unique creative spirit of the *individual* artist rather than some larger abstract totality.

Another important shift in photographic realism can be traced by examining the works of Han Yŏngsu (1933-1999). As the postwar camera eye turned to depictions of streetscapes, sites of shared *saenghwal* and social exchange, the focus of photographic scrutiny eventually moved from labor-production relations (as in the photographs of Im Sŏkche) to commodity-exchange relations. Chŏng Hun has recently written very convincingly on the subject of how Han dealt with the subject of death in the April 4, 1957 Shinsŏnhoe exhibition titled "Market Ecology" (*shijang saengt'ae*), comparing Han's choice of framing with those of fellow photographers Yi

Hyŏngnok and Chŏng Pŏmt'ae. While the others focus on dried fish (Yi) or a plucked chicken next to a live one (Chŏng), Han's work, titled "Chicken Seller," frames the shot from enough distance so that the merchant stands aloofly besides columns of dangling dead poultry [Figure 11].[33]

Figure 11. Han Yŏngsu, "Poultry Anybody?" Namdaemun Market (1957)
Source: *Salm: 1956-1960* [Korean lives after the war: 1956-1960], (Sŏul-si: Shin T'aeyangsa, 1987), 167.

Drawing from Han's statements about his experience with the Korean War, Chŏng Hun argues the dead animal bodies (now commodities) are linked to lingering memories of carnage from the war. Furthermore, Chŏng claims that in Han's photographs, by focusing on the circulation of commoditized images in the form of books, magazines, posters and display signs, and by framing them in a relationship of "visual irony" with his human subjects, revealed a process in which "the illusory effects of commodity fetishism brought on by Western consumerism propagated after the war *was changing the reality of postwar life*" (emphasis added). For Han, Chŏng argues, "this marks the point at which the figure of the human beings as a trace of pure living body disappears and now finds recognition as a social sign and identity

[33] Chŏng goes on to explain how in Han's edited volume of photographs Life: 1956-1960, his caption for the piece reads, "Killing did not stop with the end of the war, as the battle of survival took its toll on chicken and wild fowl." See Ch ŏng Hun, "1950ny ŏndae huban han'gung ri ŏllij ŭm sajin ŭi shigaks ŏng" [the visuality of late-1950s South Korean realist photography], Aura, no. 27, (2012): 49-50.

rendered visible."[34] It was no longer enough, Chŏng seems to be saying, for realism to track social relations in terms of labor and production. The photographic medium had to self-reflexively turn to the circulation of the image, the economy of looks, the replication of fantasy and simulation and their uncanny encroachment into the realm of the real.

While Han Yŏngsu's photographs often contain a rich tableau of elements and themes, the pictorial quality is downplayed by a sense of spontaneity, and can read, at a glance, as fortuitously composed snapshots. The camera angles, for example, are rarely straight on or level; the perspective is off-kilter or looks up or down from an unusual angle, making the viewer conscious of the photographer's position. The instability of the framing, especially when accompanied with blurring, conveys dynamism in motion. It also calls to attention what has been excluded (or cropped) from the frame.

One remarkable photo shows children playing in front of a film poster for Alfred Hitchcock's *To Catch a Thief* (1955), starring Cary Grant and Grace Kelly [Figure 12]. The poster interestingly tries to simulate depth (perhaps in the spirit of promoting the vividness of the VistaVision,[35] which is clearly billed at the bottom right corner of the ad) by placing another figure beyond the frame of the poster, on the same plane as the building wall, with the intent of making the action inside the poster "spill out" into the streets. Han Yŏngsu frames the shot to create a compositional match (or "rhyme") between the children playing (one of the children has his back turned to us, at the bottom edge of the frame, just as Grace Kelly's back is turned to the street observer in the film poster), so that our position as an observer of this "scene" (as voyeur, or better yet, a consumer of the image) is problematized. This effect is further heightened by a boy sitting on the curb (just below the film poster) with startling self-possession (legs apart, one

[34] Ibid., 53.
[35] VistaVision is a higher resolution and wide-screen format screening technology developed by Paramount Pictures in 1954.

hand resting on knee), as he stares back, half-squinting, across considerable distance, at the camera eye.

Figure 12. Intermedial reflexivity across street photography and cinematic visuality
Source: Han Yŏngsu, *Seoul, Modern Times* (Sŏul-si: Han's Graphic, 2014), 59.

While "the sitting boy" seems to interrogate or size up our gaze, another boy to the left appears to be unaware of the camera eye and wears an expression of elation and mischief, his look directed to a figure who has been mostly cut out of the frame, save for a hand pointing its index finger back (cropped at the wrist) at "the smiling boy." The composition, therefore, produces two key axes of tension: one between "the smiling boy" and a mostly invisible figure, "teasing out" the voyeuristic and ethnographic desire of the observer ("What are they up to?" or "How can this activity, whatever it is, reveal who they are?") and another between "the sitting boy" and the observer, which calls into question our position of the interloper ("What are you looking at?" or

"Who are you to be looking at this?"). Much as Kim Sŏnghwan's 1952 cartoon portraits of refugee women discussed in the beginning of this chapter engaged in intermedial reflexivity with the medium of photography, Han Yŏngsu's late-1950s photographs appear to think through intermedial relationships between photography and Hollywood cinema, as well as between "realistic" representations of street life and the realm of the escapist spectacle.

If the realism of Im Sŏkche's photographs, in his depiction of men at work in wharfs and mines, conferred their bodies with heroic significance by endowing them with the "fundamental strength to bring about social change,"[36] the realism of Han Yŏngsu's photographs situated human bodies (postures, actions) and faces (looks, expressions) as signs enveloped within a larger ecology of commoditized signs, consisting of mass-produced images, hand-painted display boards and mannequins in store windows [Figure 13].

Figure 13. Uncanny encounters between human bodies and commoditized mannequins
Source: Han Yŏngsu, Seoul, Modern Times, Seoul, Modern Times, (Sŏul-si: Han's Graphic, 2014), 49, 133.

Han's photographs show us how, despite attempts to demarcate boundaries of otherness with terms like "Foreign Zones" (discussed later in this chapter)—a space described as the product of

[36] Yu Pyŏngyong, "1960nyŏ ndae han'guk sajin-ŭ i riŏ llijŭ m'e kwanhan yŏ ngu" [research on realism in 1960s South Korean photography], (Masters thesis, Sangmyŏ ng University Graduate School of Culture and Arts, 2012), 13.

"the ceaseless exchange of ancient and modern, old and new, good and evil, all without a moment of pause for criticism and examination"—this so-called "foreignness" was not limited to zones but circulated more generally through the urban streets. Unlike the genre of the streetscape reportage, which produced linearly curated narratives of the post-liberation/postwar flâneur and tended towards post-colonial sentiments of xenophobia, Han's photographic renderings, by bringing a singular moment to a stand-still, held the enframed system of signs in ironic suspension, availing the relationship to the viewer's contemplation without articulating judgment.

Despite these shifts in artistic photography, the realist tendency of deploying photography within the reportage mode to capture an unseeable totality continued in the area of magazine journalism. The next section discusses how even as the photographic images slipped from factuality (photography as documentation) to fantasy (photography of staged/simulated scenes), appearing sometimes in deliberate juxtaposition to one another, images and accompanying texts of varying lengths were used to call the reader's attention to political, economic and cultural problems of South Korean society, opening them up for reflection and critique.

From Factuality to Fantasy: Photographic Reportage and the Camera-Novel

The appetite for photographic representations of streetscapes was general and not limited to any specific demographic. Whether these representations appeared in the rarefied space of the gallery exhibition or in the pages of general-interest magazines, they validated the everyday experiences of the viewer who very likely had encountered scenes similar to what was captured by the camera. They served as a shared template or an imaginary canvas on which any ordinary viewer could project his or own individual memories, sympathies, biases, fantasies and

daydreams. Within the logic of modernization and postwar reconstruction, photographs of urban life, bustling with economic activity and modern forms of transportation, validated the legitimacy of Syngman Rhee's administration, which sought to portray itself as a shepherding the impoverished nation towards economic growth and into the fold of modern, industrialized nations of the West.

However, these photographs were not simply indicators of recovery and growth. As I show in this section, the self-evident "factuality" of street photography was questioned systematically in such a way to cast wholesale doubt on public spectacle as a credible indicator for the state of South Korean society. Time and time again, there were expressions of alarm and skepticism towards aesthetics of light and the commoditized surface, which was linked to the loss of sovereign judgment and will to foreign powers. Furthermore, the ekphrasis in the caption reworked the image's symbology towards critical ends: presence pointed to lack (for example, the "refreshing" public fountain was a reminder of the difficulty of accessing drinking water at home and the brightly lit roadways meant dark and muddy streets in the countryside). The visual and textual collaboration tried to address one of the key features of developmentalist economy, which prioritizes the growth of the city by incorporating the rural economy into a national whole and jeopardizing the latter's self-sufficiency.[37]

[37] It is worth noting that, in contrast to these examples of photographic reportage, South Korean novelists in the 1950s rarely dealt with structural problems of rural communities head on. Yi Muyŏng is one notable exception. Other writers of the period who frequently set their fiction in the countryside, such as Hwang Sunwŏn, O Yŏngsu, O Yugwŏn and Yi Pŏmsŏn, for example, are described by literary critic Kim Ujong as embodying "the gentle and modest fragrances rooted in the countryside." Literary historian Kim Yunsik writes of O Yŏngsu (one of the major rural writers of the 1950s) "One does not find in O's fiction complicated rules of reality which shape the management of *saenghwal*"; instead, one finds "the past, the original." Meanwhile, where literature remained relatively silent, magazine journalism of the mid to late 1950s often joined forces with documentary photography to visualize rural stagnation, explicitly linking the relationship between the city and the countryside. I discuss everyday life in the countryside in greater detail in Chapter 3. See Kim Ujong, "Hyŏndaemunhag-ŭi t'ŭkchilgwa han'guksosŏl" [the peculiarity of contemporary literature and Korean fiction], *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*, November 13, 1959; Kim Yunsik, *Hanguk sosŏlsa*, 369.

In "Seoul's Ostentatious Display" which was published in the women's magazine *Yŏwŏn*,[38] rather than captions providing a sentimentalization of what is visible, the ekphrasis actually links the visible with the invisible to conjure, for the readers, a glimpse of a larger totality. As the title of the series suggests, not only do these readings provide a critique of the status quo, they encourage an attitude of skepticism when encountering any kind of public spectacle. For example, the "cool fountains which appears to wash away the dust and sweat from everyone's face" only "calls to mind" (*yŏnsang*) the problem of potable water. It reminds the reader that perhaps one day everyone will have access to running water "like a fountain" at home. Likewise, a shot of the night road shows the long trailing crisscrossing lines from headlights of passing cars. While it might compare to "the so-called 'avenues' abroad" the roads far from the city, the readers are reminded, become muddy every time it rains and fall pitch-black every night. In the former example, the photo links the private/domestic, which is hidden from the shared gaze, to a public image of the fountain—a misleading spectacle of abundance and respite—while the latter links the rural space, which, again, is obscured by urban displays of modern life. The photograph depicting a large group of people crowded outside a movie theater is supplemented with the caption, "It's always the same people that come to the theaters to watch new movies." While the caption does not decry the foreign sensibility of the movies—a common attitude among cultural critics of the period—it does lament that the general population does not have wider access to the cinemas. Like the previous examples, the caption asks to be skeptical about what the photograph presents—a diverse group of young and old, both male and female, crowded outside a theater—which seems to suggest that theater-going *is* a widely available recreational experience.

[38] "Seoul's Ostentatious Display" *Yŏwŏn*, September 1957.

The problem of infiltration of "foreign sensibility" (*igukchŏngsŏ*) is expressed in many ways. The aerial shot of jeeps and cars on the street "may give the impression of a car show." The readers are reminded, however, that brands such as Ford, Chevrolet, Buick and Lincoln are all foreign-imports and that even the supposedly domestically produced Sibal is equipped with an imported engine, and that South Korea cannot produce even a drop of oil.[39] In a similar vein, a photo showing a brightly lit display room featuring extravagant foreign goods ("two-thirds of the inventory") under the ineffectual sign "Buy Korean-Made Goods!" and signboards all over the streets like "the unappealingly caked-on make up of a country girl" hang in front of stores, labeled *International, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Napoli, London, Paris, Brazil, Washington*, et cetera. Finally, a photograph of men and women dancing closely together is described as "suspicious lighting, the gentle flow of the melody, sweet whispers and the sobbing of slender bodies." The caption explains, "The reason why these places of socializing receive withering glances is because Korea is not a comfortable foreign country but a country where, every year, there are farming families suffering from food shortage and people committing suicide because of their difficult lives."

It is hard to overstate the extent to which the women's magazine *Yŏwŏn* was steeped in the issue of everyday life in the postwar years. In addition to a regular section called "essays of *saenghwal*," it also provided photography supplements which covered everyday life from several different angles, guided by the interests and tastes of its predominantly female readership. They constitute a gendered form of everyday photojournalism, encompassing *saenghwal* of women in both professional and domestic spaces. A typical series might shadow an aspiring female architect or a nurse on a typical day of work, or it would visit the homes of public figures or

[39] The popular discontent with the presence of automobiles in the late-1950s comes to a head after the April Revolution when student leaders call for the elimination of cars from the streets. See "Ŏullijido annŭn nangbi" [unsuitable waste], *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun,* October 29, 1960.

celebrities or foreigners living in Seoul[40] to provide both voyeuristic pleasure and applicable practical wisdom about household management. Some were pieces of reportage dedicated to Tongdaemun market[41] or the rural leader program in the countryside.[42] But perhaps the most curious and experimental genre of photography in *Yŏwŏn* was the so-called "camera-novel."

The genre of the camera-novel began to appear in *Yŏwŏn* in the mid-1950s. While the spirit of intermedial experimentation it embodies can be traced back to the film-novels (*yŏnghwa sosŏl*) of the mid-1920s, which engaged in "explicit intermediation of film, illustration, and literature,"[43] the form, I will argue, is better understood within the context of contemporaneous development in photographic realism discussed in the previous section. It is also worth noting that in Japan, the photographic novels (*shashin shōsetsu*) appeared as early as the 1920s and persisted into the 1950s. Sarah Frederick's study on the Japanese version of the genre touches on gendered forms of consumption, as a way the woman reader confined to their homes, experiences "what she might not otherwise experience inside her domestic space,"[44] its modernist and self-conscious aesthetic that played on the tension between text and image,[45] and its self-referential consideration as a medium—as we see, for example, in a photographic novel about the use of photographs for arranged dates (*omiai*).[46] Frederick finally argues that while the genre was "transformed in its effects by historical circumstances," the use of photographic

[40] "Newly Married American Couple in *Ondol*," *Yŏwŏn*, March 1959.
[41] "Report: East Gate Market," *Yŏwŏn*, April 1959.
[42] "Young Woman Spreading Seeds of Hope on Country Roads," *Yŏwŏn*, May 1959.
[43] For an in-depth study on *yŏnghwa sosŏl* from the colonial period, see Theodore Hughes, *Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea: Freedom's Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 26-34.
[44] Sarah Frederick, "Novels to See/Movies to Read: Photographic Fiction in Japanese Women's Magazines," *positions* 18, no. 3 (Winter 2010), 729-730.
[45] Ibid., 745.
[46] Ibid., 759.

medium continued to affect "how it interact[ed] with its subjects" even when the format was meant to be explicitly fictional.[47]

The South Korean camera-novel in the 1950s similarly contained self-conscious and self-referential modernist elements, without completely negating its documentary valence. Even when employing cinematic techniques of montage, close-ups, and lighting design to stage a fantasy space for its readers, it relied on the indexical solidity of photography (over hand-drawn illustrations) to visualize the action. The camera-novel differed most drastically from the film-novels of the 1920s in the dominant role played by the image. The image was often spread across the entire page (rather than scaled down to a frame within the page or arranged in playful mimicry of cartoon strips, as more "journalistic" pictorials sometimes did), accompanied by a small block of narrative text embedded in a blank space within the image. There were minor exceptions. Sometimes the narrative component would demand a strip of space reserved exclusively for the text. Sometimes, a few "supporting" photographs would appear next to or embedded within the image, but primarily to function as transitional images between pages. For the most part, however, the logic of the progression was one image-per-page, each page constituting a "scene" and the narrative caption playing a supporting role. It is worth noting that this marks a significant reversal of the image-text hierarchy that we saw in the streetscape-reportage in the late-1940s to mid-1950s, in which illustrations served to supplement the narrative.

Photographs of the mid to late-1950s circulated as magazine pictorials (*hwabo*) should be understood differently from their counterpart of the 1920s and the 1930s. The "meaning" of a photograph and what it can contribute semiotically to a mixed-media genre such as a film-novel or a camera-novel should be analyzed within the context of a broader ecology of visual media of

[47] Ibid., 764.

that specific period. While artistic photography as a practice existed during the Japanese colonial period, natural landscapes and objects of idealized aesthetic forms were preferred to vibrant scenes of everyday life. As discussed in the previous section, it was not until the postwar period that professional photographers (many of whom had documented the brutality of the war firsthand) became interested in using photography to capture vibrant, socially significant scenes of everyday life. Furthermore, popular photography emerged as a method of turning personal, quotidian moments into mini-spectacles for ordinary people. To be sure, my claim is not that photographs of everyday streetscapes did not circulate in some form during the colonial period, but rather, that life on the street did not achieve the level of cultural cachet as a subject of worthy of artistic attention by professional and amateur photographers alike until the postwar-1950s. After the Korean War, photography became *the* authoritative, dominant method for documenting public forms of *saenghwal*, and therefore a visual gateway into South Korean social reality.

Another important shift in the photographic visual regime from the Japanese colonial period through the post-Korean War 1950s would be to look at the changing significance of aerial photography. Under the Japanese occupation, aerial shots or images of the colonial capital was heavily regulated; after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, ordinary citizens were banned from taking photos just over twenty meters above ground level.[48] During the Korean War, imaging from above was linked with surveillance and aerial targeting for bombardment, destruction and death; a reminder of victimization by foreign power and the war's unspeakable horrors. Only in the postwar years did top-down images of Seoul have a chance to take on more positive associations of collectivity and rebirth. A new appetite for aerial and long

[48] O Hyejin, "The Eye of the Machine and the Melancholic Objects: Visual Control through the Empire of Technology and (Un)consciousness about Photography in the Colony," *SAI* 10 (2011): 179.

shots of Seoul and its specific neighborhoods burgeoned.[49] Even if these photographs portrayed grim realities of postwar existence, they offered a common arena—a potential space for shared imagining and hope—where Koreans were struggling to survive and rebuild together. Once these factors coalesced to generate a steady supply of photographic streetscapes, whether taken on ground-level or from high above, they became abstractable as a genre and therefore reproducible as a stylistic convention by photographers and magazine editors. This also meant that they were available for manipulation and integration into different forms of genre.

The camera-novel is one instance of such integration. Rather than seeing these stories as a symptom of a transitional or inchoate genre, I read them as a sign that photographers and editors were experimenting with different forms of information, emotion and pleasure that such a hybrid genre could deliver. Furthermore, I see the form's emergence as a push towards a more sophisticated semiotics of narrative and photography that had not been possible with single page image-to-caption arrangement. As shown in the two examples of camera-novels I close-read below, the diegetic space-time evoked in the gaps often exceeded the moment captured by the camera.[50] These invisible gaps also invited the readers to invest their own memories into the fictional narrative. One strategy for this is to integrate images of recognizable public spaces or documentation of historical events where the reader can project their collective memory.

"Employment" is a nine-page story about Ch'ŏlgŭn, a young man who goes in search of a job six-months after being discharged from the military.[51] He gets turned down for a reporter

[49] This is not to suggest that after the Korean Armistice Agreement, militarized visuality did not continue to intrude into everyday life of civilians. At the material level, just as many South Korean civilians relied on commodities and resources sold, stolen, or scavenged from the U.S. military base to make ends meet, civilian photographers repurposed film stock originally produced for aerial photography from the Osan Air Force Base. See *Sourcebook Vol. 2* (Sŏul: Korea Institute of Photography and Culture, 2010), 95.
[50] Scott McCloud describes "the gutter" as the negative space between the panels where the reader's imagination "animates" the narrative from the discrete, static illustrations. See Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994), 66.
[51] Ko Chŏnggi (writer) and Kim Kyuhyŏk (photographer), "Employment," *Yŏwŏn*, November 1959.

position at company S. There he runs into Yŏnghŭi, a romantic interest from his college days. What follows is a flashback: fond memories of their time together, their painful separation brought on by the Korean War, and the moment he learns that Yŏnghŭi had gotten married to another man. The story ends abruptly with the news that Ch'ŏlgŭn has been hired by company S. With a certain satisfaction, he turns down the job—the assumption being that he would find it too painful to work for the husband of his lost love. "Holiday," on the other hand, is a nine-page story about a middle-aged man named Hyŏk who is visited by a former student Ogi.[52] As in "Employment," the reader is taken through a flashback of their former relationship, which, though verging on something more than a teacher-student relationship, abruptly ends. It turns out that Ogi was in love with another teacher and disappeared in shame and guilt when her feelings become public. Hyŏk and Ogi spend the rest of the day together and end up on a hill, where she tells him that though she's "all grown up," she wishes she was still a young girl and disappears as abruptly as she reappeared.

In both stories, the composition, the camera position vis-à-vis the actor, and sequencing of the photographs are very deliberately executed. Since Ch'ŏlgŭn in "Employment" is supposed to be a man who is down-and-out, the actor poses in an exaggerated fashion to give off this impression. He is shown, one hand in pocket, downward-looking and pensive. The image of the male model with his pompadour hair and short blazer is composed to produce a romanticized idea of a brooding young man. The flashback to the Korean War shows a documentary image of American jeeps driving through a city street while a throng of Korean men watch from the edges. On the next page, a small child—perhaps an orphan—looking unkempt, lost and hungry—stands in the foreground while the demolished ruins of a building loom from behind. The next page, which is meant to depict Ch'ŏlgŭn's reaction upon learning that Yŏnghui has married another

[52] "Holiday," *Yŏwŏn,* April 1960.

man simply shows a close-up of a table in disarray—a kettle, bottle of liquor and a knocked-over cup. Neither the hero nor the heroine makes an appearance for three consecutive frames (in a nine frame story). The readers move seamlessly from images documenting history—images familiar to any ordinary Korean reader as moments of the nation's shared history—to an image of an anonymous table, most likely staged. This abrupt shift from images of "historical factuality" to an image of "fantasy" allows the artificially composed photograph to be affectively imprinted. The everyday intimacy of household objects and their private scene of minor disarray become loaded with historical meaning. Only then can we make sense of Ch'ŏlgŭn's decisive moment on the final page when he rematerializes to turn down the job offer.

The models are used somewhat differently in "Holiday." The face of the man who plays Hyŏk is turned towards the camera in most of the frames. In stark contrast, Ogi's face is shown with a radiant smile, showcasing the actor's charms. At first glance, Hyŏk appears to function as a faceless avatar, so that any reader can comfortably inhabit his role and live vicariously through his journey, but considering the fact the story appears in *Yŏwŏn* whose readership was primarily women, and that Hyŏk is eventually shown to be a kind of hapless fool whose romantic fantasy is ultimately frustrated, he was likely meant to function mainly as a target of parody. While the logic of the narrative positions Hyŏk as the protagonist who is trying to get his second chance with Ogi after a protracted period of longing—on one page, we see them sitting shoulder-to-shoulder, Ogi's hair braided on both sides like a school girl—it turns out that Ogi was using this encounter with him to reclaim her own childhood. In the end, she proudly declares, "I'm all grown up now. If you knew what my job was, I think it would shock you… Don't you think I've always been greedy? Okay, my teacher, goodbye!" She "skips" away from him coquettishly down the hill until disappearing into a dark alley after being briefly lit by a passing car.

Accompanying the narration is a wide shot of Seoul seen from an elevated position. The narration describes the image well: "Below them, there was the sprawl of Seoul's nightscape. Flickering neon lights and their variegated colors were beautiful." The last frame is obviously meant to contrast with the opening frame, which also shows a wide shot of Seoul, but in this case, the camera is closer to ground-level and targeting a smaller area—a specific neighborhood perhaps—and since the shot is taken during the day, the roofs of the houses are shown to be made of tiles. The sequence of photographs taking us from Ogi's girlhood (in an idealizing silhouette) to offering a drink to Hyŏk as a young woman, walking the streets with him arm-in-arm like a couple, riding around in a car and finally, taking a romantic walk up a hill to enjoy the flickering nightscape reveals an undercurrent of sorrow and loss that is not confined to the image of Hyŏk, "who stood there in a daze like someone who'd dropped something that belonged to him"; if the object of his loss (i.e. Ogi) is somewhere midst the darkness in the nightscape below, perhaps the same can be said for reader. There is also the important question of Ogi's profession, which is left vague. This unease about Ogi's identity reflects the general attitude towards American-influenced lifestyle that was so publicly visible in the postwar-1950s. The oppositions between light and dark, the visible and the invisible, figured in the story's "light" opening shot and "dark" closing shot as well as in the backlit silhouettes of Hyŏk and Ogi, find thematic articulation through the simple question: Is Ogi knowable?

Both "Employment" and "Holiday" rely on interruption of present-progressive time as inhabited by a male protagonist due to the sudden appearance of a woman from the past. The triggered recollections are reminders of some form of loss. In "Holiday," the loss comes in the form of missed romantic opportunity, while in "Employment" the loss of love and national trauma converge. In both cases, the narratives are able to invite the collective emotional

investment of readers by citing photographs referencing a shared history. In "Employment," these shared reference points are documentary images of the Korean War; in "Holiday," they are wide shots of the city, during the day and at night. The understanding of the logic of recollection as being tied to the mechanism of photography and cinema is made explicit both in "Employment" and "Holiday": in "Employment," Ch'ŏlgŭn keeps a photo of Yŏnghŭi, which he eventually tears up, and in "Holiday," when Ogi first reappears early in the story, the narration states, "the final glimpse of Ogi brushed past Hyŏk's mind as if on a projection screen (*yŏngsamak*)." These bookending descriptions of Ogi at pivotal moments of her appearing and disappearing as ghost-like presence, a phantasm, shows the other side of photography, as suggesting negativity and ontological uncertainty that come with the technological manipulation of light fundamental to photography and cinema.

With my close readings of photographic reportage and the camera-novel from the postwar 1950s, I hope to have shown that despite the relative novelty of popular photography in South Korea, the approach towards photography's indexical "faithfulness" was far from naïve. By targeting sites of urban spectacle (e.g. public fountains, department stores) and deploying critical texts to debunk their misleading claims to prosperity, photographic reportage such as "Seoul's Ostentatious Display" functioned as a kind of "anti-documentary," methodically calling into question the photograph's evidentiary status and underscoring the medium's implication in disseminating state-sponsored ideology. The camera-novel, on the other hand, exploited photography's ability to mix and fuse historical facticity with personal fantasy, finding opportunity to level a critique at social issues (such as widespread unemployment) and gender troubles (such as self-aggrandizing male desire). The indexicality of the documentary photographs deployed within the narratives of the camera-novel performed a socially

constructive role by mobilizing disparate desires and imaginative investment of the readership around representations of shared moments and places.

Seoul's Outsiders: Postwar Portraits of "The Foreigner"

The May 1958 issue of the magazine *Hŭimang* ("Hope") carried a pictorial section titled "Seoul's Outsiders" (*sŏulŭi ibang'in*), the first photograph featuring two figures, shot diagonally and from slightly below. In the picture, a young Western woman is smiling brightly while a bearded older Korean man in traditional white clothes and horsehair hat looks off into the same direction with a more somber, even disgruntled expression. The caption reads, "The outsiders do not yet fit into our *saenghwal*. This might be why the contrast between us can only bring a sense of awkwardness." The other photos depict Western women and men—all of them white—getting on a bus, singing hymns, and attending public events, all alongside Korean people. The final two captions read, "They wish to know our customs (*p'ungsŭp,* 風習)…but meanwhile, they are looking squarely into (*chiksi*, 直視) our very *saenghwal*" [Figure 14].

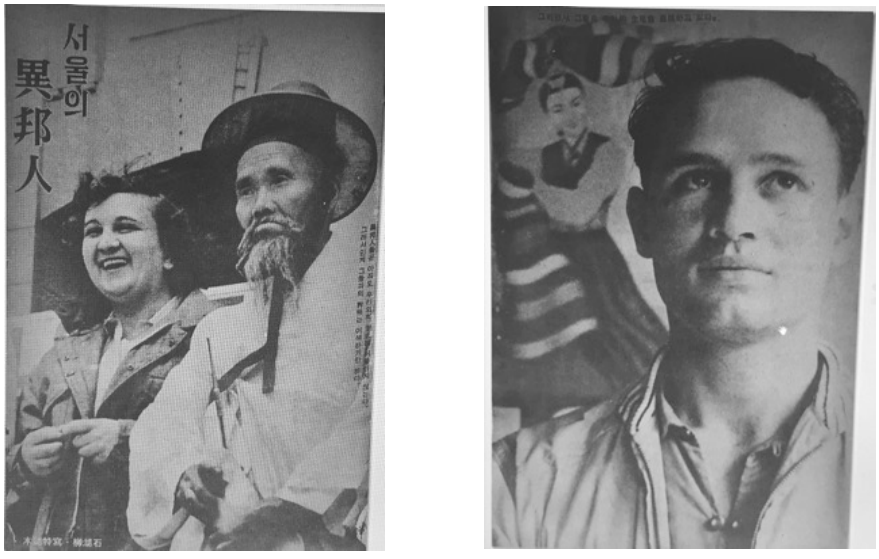

Figure 14. Looking at Foreigners Looking at Korea
Source: *Hŭimang*, "The Outsiders of Seoul" (May 1958)

Ironically, the photograph that the caption accompanies features a young white man with his eyes looking up dreamily, while over his right shoulder looms a painting of a young Korean dancer in colorful traditional dress. Far from looking at anything with concentrated scrutiny (*chiksi*), the male subject seems to be lost in a daydream. The pictorial has turned the exoticizing, ethnographic gaze of the Westerner back on the observer. It is he who is the subject of the portrait, not the Korean dancer, who remains on the side, out-of-focus. *They may be watching us*, the pictorial seems to say. *But we are also watching them watch us.*

It is not surprising, perhaps, that depictions of perceived "outsiders" ran the gamut during the postwar, but what is undeniable is the sudden proliferation of the term *ibang* (異邦) used to describe that which was foreign or alien in magazines and in the popular press. In addition to the *Hŭimang* pictorial "Seoul's Outsiders," *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun* published a series called "Korea's Foreign Zones" (November 21-29, 1955). The series covered sites such as the dance hall in Chosun Hotel where one "becomes a half-alien" (*pan ibang'in*) and "can scarcely remember one's own nationality," foreign bookstores that sold film magazines, novels, photo albums, and American department store catalogues for purchase by "the sensualists," and the Yŏŭido airport which was considered to have "no direct connection with most Korean people." In the same vein, *Shint'aeyang* published its own pictorial called "Seoul's Foreign Zone" in its July 1958 issue.[53] Compared to *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*'s "Korea's Foreign Zones," the *Shint'aeyang* pictorial focused more on the visible presence of "foreign" bodies rather than on the idea of foreign zones understood as contaminated or de-nationalized cultural spaces. The photograph on the title page featured a dark-skinned boy with curly hair looking off in the distance, hand-in-mouth, while three other children sit in the background [Figure 15].

[53] The term catches on can be seen re-deployed in similar contexts in later decades. For example, see "Foreign Zone" and "Zone of Different Shade (*yisaek chidae*)," *Shindonga*, January 1966, 273-277.

Figure 15. "*Seoul's Foreign Zone*"
Source: *Shint'aeyang* (July 1958)

While some of the so-called "mixed blood" orphans would be adopted by families in the United States, the caption states that many children remain in Korea. (The photograph was taken at an orphanage in Myŏngdong.) Another picture shows U.S. military personnel fraternizing with South Korean women in Samgakji. The shots are framed voyeuristically, first from behind a tree and the second from across the street, as if taken by a passerby. The series also contained photographs of Chinatown and Yonsei University's school for foreigners, where the children of foreign diplomatic officials were taught. By linking the idea of foreignness with a zone or a territory that can be given a name and bounded off, the pictorial participated (along with the reader-viewer) in separating out an ethnonational imaginary, even if these "foreign zones" were physically inscribed within the territory of South Korea.

This is not to say that all representations of foreigners entailed attempts at segregation and containment. In 1959, *Tonga Ilbo* ran a series which attempted to reverse how Koreans might conceive of the so-called "international marriages." The prevailing stereotype of such international marriages at the time was that they were made up of U.S. soldiers and female

Korean civilians. Opinion columns critical of such practices were numerous.[54] *Tonga Ilbo*'s stated intention was to present more positive portraits of international marriages. The series "International Households" followed primarily two strategies towards this end. First, they consciously shifted the focus of attention to foreigner women married to Korean men. (They kept to this rule with the exception of one case in which Korean female was married to a Filipino male.) Second, while stories of scandal about U.S. soldiers and Korean women often involved running away to the United States, most of the articles in the series focused on households that had not only settled in South Korea but were raising their children there. Within these parameters, the foreign women were often described as honorary Koreans (e.g. "she might as well be Korean") though their cultural and linguistic fluency varied from case to case. Even more interestingly, the children of these international households were always described in positive and glowing terms, in stark contrast to the ways in which orphans of U.S. soldiers and Korean mothers were portrayed.[55]

What allowed these "international" families to be both Korean and cosmopolitan had to do with class, educational pedigree, and their rootedness in Korean domestic *saenghwal*. Another crucial factor that cannot be ignored (but remained unmentioned in the *Tonga Ilbo* series) was an entrenched patrilineal system in which it was legally impossible for a single mother to establish a

[54] In one story, a Korean woman marries a U.S. soldier, moves to Rhode Island, and missing her homeland, went off to New York, then San Francisco's Red Cross, before finally seeking repatriation at a South Korean embassy. See "International Marriage Shattered," *Tonga Ilbo*, August 18, 1957. Another piece recount's a lover's suicide between a Korean woman and a U.S. soldier of "a different color" (*isaek*). See "Lover's Suicide With American Soldier of Different Race," *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*, July 12, 1955.

[55] The women were from Germany, Indonesia, France, the United States, Thailand, Malaysia and the Soviet Union. In every case, the women came from distinguished backgrounds or had received an excellent education. Their Koreanization, furthermore, was described in highly gendered terms, contingent on to what extent the women were able to adapt to Korean norms of domesticity, including the ability to prepare and enjoy Korean cuisines. For example, though the woman from Soviet Union couldn't speak Korean even after living in Korea for twenty years, she was considered "no different than a Korean" on account of her being able to enjoy kimchi, *kkaktugi* and *kkochujangjjigae*.[55] While the article begins by describing her as "a woman from Northern country" (she is from Siberia), it concludes by saying "rather than the image of a woman from Northern country…you see the pride of being the wife of a Korean or a mother (*ŏmŏni*)." See "International Households: Soviet Woman," *Tonga Ilbo*, January 4, 1959.

household of her own. As Bongsoo Park has shown, the Family Law of 1957 became the legal basis "by which mixed blood children were excluded" from national citizenship; a Korean citizen father would be required to be a legitimate member of a family in South Korea.[56] The debates in the National Assembly appealed to blood-based conception of a pure race and the sheer *optics* of racial diversity. For instance, Assemblyman Cho Kukhyŏn stated that if racial purity were not preserved, "This country would become *a place of exhibition* [laughter]. *Race exhibition.* We can't allow racial mixing… We are not the United States where black and white races mingle. Korea is of a single race" (emphasis added).[57]

To politicians like Cho, the bodies (and their visibility) of so-called mixed-raced children constituted a threat to national purity for a fledgling post-colonial nation. Newspapers appeared willing to frame the plight of these children in more sympathetic terms, though time and time again, they were referred as "relic" (*yumul*) or "legacy" (*yusan*) of Liberation and the Korean War—in other words, the children were victims of history, but "social problems" that needed to be resolved nonetheless. From the perspective of the South Korean state, the best solution was trying to send every one of these mixed-blood orphans to the United States.[58] As Eleanna Kim argues in *Adopted Territory*, "President Rhee had significant interest in promoting Korean adoption abroad, and his office exerted considerable effort to locate specific children requested by American couples."[59] 1950s adoption policies reveal how "South Korean biopolitics dovetailed with its geopolitics" so that overseas adoptees actually became mediators of "intimate

[56]According to Park, these legal technologies served to produce a form of Koreanness that was "symbolically institutionalized, gendered and racialized." See Bongsoo Park, "Intimate Encounters, Racial Frontiers: Stateless GI Babies in South Korea and the United States, 1953-1965" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2010), 30-31.
[57] Ibid., 51.
[58] In 1958, Holt's plan was to send up to 1,000 mixed-blood orphans to the United States as overseas adoptees. According to the Ministry of Education, there were 1146 mixed-blood orphans throughout South Korea by 1959. See, "Mixed-blood Children to America Again," *Tonga Ilbo*, March 17, 1959.
[59] Eleanna Kim, *Adopted Territory: Transnational Korean Adoptees and the Politics of Belonging* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 62.

relations between states."[60] Within this arrangement, the children actually became vehicles of economic aid. U.S. dollars also entered the domestic economy through adoption agency fees. Kim rightly argues that this commodity/person slippage produced "closeness and distance, identification and difference, common humanity and base inequality."[61]

In summary, "foreign" bodies of children who were abandoned by foreign soldiers were often portrayed as unsettling reminders of South Korea's poverty, weakened ethnonational identity, and compromised sovereignty. In reality, abject portrayals of these children were actually predicated on a patrilineal legal logic. The fact the call for racial purity was absent in the profiles of "international households" in which the father was Korean suggests that the preservation and maintenance of Korean *saenghwal* did not have to be grounded in a blood-based notion of the ethnonation. What it required, instead, was a household legally supported by a Korean head of family and animated by Korean sensibility, diet, and way-of-life, organized around highly demarcated gender roles.

While the chapter has focused primarily on journalism, reportage, and visual representations, I conclude this section with a brief discussion of a short story by An Sugil (1911-1977) titled "Blue Eyes,"[62] which explores a range of conflicting associations and affects linked to the figure of the mixed-blood child during this period. While stories containing such figures were not uncommon, what makes An's story especially remarkable is that it tells the story from two differing perspectives. The story is about five-year-old Yŏng'ae, who, with blue eyes and wavy black hair, has the appearances of "a Western doll that has come to life." The story is organized around the perspective of Yŏng'ae's mother Oksun and that of another young woman in the neighborhood Hyŏnju, who adores Yŏng'ae's doll-like appearance. The differing

[60] Ibid., 72.
[61] Ibid., 76.
[62] An Sugil, "Parannun," [blue eyes], *Shint'aeyang*, November 1957, 290-299.

perspectives move beyond the personal realm of these individual characters to explore the effects of overlapping structures of colonial memory and post-colonial social reality that are organized around the figure of a mixed-blood child. The story also teases out the contingent nature of consumerist affect and urban mobility when it is linked to a racialized body.

Oksun's narrative is, as one might expect, one of pathos, hardship, and suffering. She is a Korean War refugee, who was separated from her husband, crossed Han River when Seoul was occupied by the North Korean army and returned to Seoul when it was retaken by U.N. forces. After sleeping with a U.S. soldier ("it was but one passionate night"), she becomes pregnant with Yŏng'ae and is eventually abandoned by her husband for lying about the affair. Despite her social ostracization, she is determined to keep the child rather than give her away for overseas adoption ("She did not even try to look up the name of such agencies"). While the story does not make light of her maternal sacrifice, Oksun cannot completely banish the feeling that her life might have been easier had Yŏng'ae not been born. Looking into the child's eyes, she thinks, "Those sparkling, piercing blue eyes! To Oksun, they were not adorable or lovely. They were scary and frightful... 'These are the eyes are what brought all that misfortune!'"

The story pivots its point-of-view with the introduction of Hyŏnju who sees something different in Yŏng'ae: "Those blue eyes! The same eyes that gave Oksun such frightful and bleak thoughts was felt by Hyŏnju to be something beautiful. They also reminded her of those cherished years of girlhood." Those years that Hyŏnju remembers so fondly go back before the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor, when American school children sent dolls to Japanese children as gifts. Hyŏnju recalls bits of Japanese ("*doll lady with blue eyes, celluloid from America*") as well as songs from her primary school days, also with Japanese words woven in. When these recollections come popping out—"through Hyŏnju's lips unconsciously"—she

wonders about the reason. Through the narration, the reader learns that Hyŏnju grew up in a poor family and that she could not afford a pretty doll and had to make do with a doll sewn out of cotton and cloth with its face drawn on with ink. "As for Hyŏnju," An writes, "she wanted a Western doll for herself with blue eyes shining as if they were alive." After Liberation, Hyŏnju marries a promising medical student, who goes on to work as a professor in the United States. In the meantime, Hyŏnju is living with her in-laws.

Hyŏnju's fascination with Yŏng'ae is implicated in a colonial-period nostalgia and a fetishistic fixation with Western commodities that stretches back before the U.S. military occupation. Hyŏnju's childlessness and her husband's absence (which is linked to the U.S.-Korean alliance) have the effect of "liberating" Hyŏnju by providing her with both the time and the financial means of enjoying a life of freedom and leisure in the city. Within this arrangement, Yŏng'ae appears to be an ideal accessory, both fulfilling a lack from Hyŏnju's deprived childhood by performing as a substitute for a lifelike Western doll and fulfilling Hyŏnju's desire for the commodity fetish. Yŏng'ae, in this regard, is a figure of the *post-colonial uncanny*. Bill Brown has argued that a species of "American uncanny" haunts U.S. national culture as a result of its encounter with slavery—namely, because Americans have subsequently repressed the history of having created ontological ambiguity between humans and things (that is, of having treated humans *as* things).[63] In Yŏng'ae's case, what has been repressed is Hyŏnju's former association with Western bodies as pure commodity fantasy mediated by Japanese interwar cosmopolitanism. After the Second World War, there is both a need to repress the memory of the colonial past and a need to re-orient one's understanding of what Western bodies mean vis-à-vis the self.

[63] Bill Brown, "Reification, Reanimation, and the American Uncanny," *Critical Inquiry* 32 (Winter 2006), 178.

While Yŏng'ae makes possible this delicate balance of colonial nostalgia and U.S.-style consumerist culture—indeed, one of Hyŏnju's favorite activities is to go shopping with Yŏng'ae or to dress her, like a doll, in extravagant clothing—this balance is ultimately overthrown when a boy on the street mistakes Yŏng'ae to be Hyŏnju's own daughter. The misunderstanding shakes Hyŏnju to the core: "Me? Yŏng'ae's mother?...What did that kid take me for?" The insult and shame associated with being mistaken for a Western Princess in postwar South Korea is too great to be offset by personally cherished associations with Yŏng'ae's Western-looking doll-like body. As demonstrated earlier in the section on post-liberation streetscape-reportage, one's encounter with the urban aesthetics of the surface—the images, the display windows, the shining commodities—were not necessarily de-historicized. Narratives of the postwar period sought to situate their aura and effects within historical contexts—often struggling with the legacy of the colonial period while grappling with the challenges of the solidifying Cold War order. As shown in An's "Blue Eyes," the visuality of racialized bodies of the so-called "outsiders" similarly produced overlapping and often conflicting historical memories and subjectivities, as they inspired feelings of abjection, fear, wonder, pleasure, desire, and want.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined literary reportage, artistic photography, magazine photo-journalism, camera-novels, and human-interest stories from the post-liberation period to the postwar-1950s to understand them as part of an evolving multi-media and multi-generic assemblage of streetscape representations. Within the context of visual culture, while the increasing availability of photography as a popular format of representation (for producers and consumers alike) and the widespread public interest in vivid documentation of street life in

postwar Seoul produced an efflorescence of "everyday-life realism," this movement was also accompanied by modernist self-reflexivity and skepticism towards the indexical virtues of the camera. What is striking is that this kind of self-reflexivity was not limited to elite, intellectual discourse, but rather, also "visible" in popular forms of visual consumption like magazine reportage and the camera-novel.

Before concluding this chapter, I want to point to a later photographic "mapping" of street *saenghwal* that demonstrate the continuing significance of these themes into the mid-1960s, while under Park Chung-hee's rule. On November of 1964 and June of 1965, the popular magazine *Shin Tonga* published a set of photographic pictorials of Korean and Japanese urban streetscapes. The former pictorial was titled "The Japan Inside Korea," focusing on Japanese cultural products circulating through various shops and stalls. The attitude conveyed in the pictorial is not so different from the sentiment of the *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun* series "Foreign Zone," which was published in the mid-1950s—these foreign cultural productions are perceived as impurities contaminating South Korean culture. On the other hand, the pictorial of Japanese streetscapes that appear scarcely a year later, titled "Shadows of Tokyo," emphasized the uncanny similarity between the streetscapes of Tokyo and Seoul, framing the visuality of life on the street as an index of modernization and development rather than a testament of the singularity of national culture. Crucially, this second issue was published in the same month that the Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea was signed, bringing $800 million in grants, economic aid, loans and private trust to South Korea. For over a year prior to the treaty's signing, there had been protests by Korean university students, who described the treaty as "Korea-Japan Diplomacy of Humiliation" and called for President Park to

step down.[64] At this crucial moment of geopolitical change during the Cold War, then, street photography went beyond the function of capturing concrete specificity of shared *saenghwal* or serving as a sign of aesthetic sophistication or technical mastery of the camera in international competitions; rather, these elements were negated to emphasize a general, abstractable *feel* of modernity that would facilitate the claim of parity between Japan and Korean urban *saenghwal* and foster a kind of regional affinity and kinship across parallel urban realities. These resemblances, then, would help naturalize the logic of economic intercourse heralded by the Normalization Treaty.

If the medium of photography lent itself eventually to facile appropriation by state-sponsored discourses of modernization and neo-colonial normalization, the literary field maintained a skeptical attitude towards the very conditions of mediated visuality of urban experience. This is to say, while the post-liberation efflorescence of streetscape representations in literary reportage had worked in tandem with the multi-media mapping of urban space through illustrations and artistic and reportage photography to produce a socially constructive *and* critical mosaic of a shared space and time, postwar writers increasingly expressed a deep ambivalence towards ontological, sociological, and mass-cultural logics of Americanism and Western modernity, manifested through critiques of scientific rationality, mechanization of society, and mass-mediated visual culture. In the older-generation writers Yi Muyŏng and Kim Kwangju, for example, their critical attitude towards the epistemic poverty of scientism was expressed through the satirical rendering of symbolic "professor" figures and the characters' narrow-minded negotiations of their *saenghwal*. In the younger writers, such as Kim Kwangsik, Ha Kŭnch'an, and Nam Chŏnghyŏn, the male protagonists were portrayed as demoralized and demobilized by

[64] "Wiguk" [crisis], *Tonga Ilbo*, June 3, 1964. For an English-language account of the Korea University student demonstrations in June of 1965, see J. Mark Mobius, "The Japan-Korea Normalization Process and Korean Anti-Americanism," *Asian Survey* 6, no. 4 (April 1966): 241.

conditions of postwar poverty or by the draconian functionalism of a mechanistic society. When energized towards action, their subjectivity was in thrall to the power of commodities or mediated spectacles. In the next chapter, I link these tendencies to contemporary critical debates about the need to search for ontological and aesthetic alternatives to literary naturalism.

CHAPTER 2

Beyond Naturalism: Literature and the Postwar Crisis of Representation

> "Just as naturalism declined from its position of literary mainstream, so did the desire to provoke the reader's interest by objectively apprehending society's particular mode of everyday life (*saenghwal*)."
>
> —Son Usŏng, "Cultivating the New Sprout of Human Literature" from *Tonga Ilbo* (1955)[1]

> "Were I to formulate my feel for 'existentialist literature' at the time, it would've been 'Dostoyevsky-the sacred (*shinsŏng*) =Sartre.' What I learned from this was an 'eye' for looking at objects (*sa'mul*)."
>
> —Chang Yonghak, "Existence and The Poetry of John," from *Anthology of Controversial Works of Postwar South Korea* (1966)[2]

In a 1957 article titled, "The Influence of Modern Naturalism on New Korean Literature," literary critic Paek Ch'ŏl leveled a sweeping indictment against the harmful effects of "naturalism" on South Korean contemporary literature. After tracing the resilience of naturalism from the early years of "new literature" to the postwar era, Paek quoted at length from Cho Yongman's story "A Season in Hell" to demonstrate what he meant;

> If you cross the station and enter the alley northward but don't turn left and keep walking towards north, you'll find the forty steps that are so famous in Pusan. If you climb those forty steps a narrow path on a hill slants in two directions. If you take the left path, then it becomes a major thruway, but if you take the right and go past the occasional Western cigarette and chocolate venders, then a wide hilly road leading up to where the broadcast station appears, and then you get hairtail and tofu vendors sitting on the ground shoulder-to-shoulder and the feeling is that of being at a street market. [3]

What may appear to us as a set of painstakingly detailed directions was, for Paek, a symptom of overemphasizing external description. It was immaterial to Paek that the purpose of these directions could be to guide Cho's contemporaries, eventually, to a "refugee slum completely

[1] Son Usŏng, "Cultivating the New Sprout of Human Literature" *Tonga Ilbo*, December 24, 1955.
[2] Chang Yonghak, "Siljongwa Yohansijip" [existence and poetry of John], *Han'guk chŏnhu munjejakp'umjip*, (Sŏul: Sin'gu'munhwasa, 1966), 400.
[3] Paek Ch'ŏl, "The Influence of Modern Naturalism on Korean New Literature" *Nonmunjip* 2 (1957): 40.

crammed with over two hundred shanties" (which presumably existed in real-life Pusan), or that such a description may both invoke and satisfy multiple overlapping documentary, touristic, ethnographic, or social-realist appetites among the reading public. One may be justified in asking, then, exactly why Paek was so troubled by what he deemed to be a preoccupation with external reality. How did Paek envision a proper path for the future of "new Korean literature"?

The answer may be found in an earlier article by Paek titled, "What Comes After Naturalism," in which he calls for a literature that is able to articulate a harmonious human being, who has unified subjectivity and objectivity. Literature's search for the nature (*ponjil*) of humanity was not simply an individual endeavor, but a universalist attempt to represent "immense totalistic method and meaning with consequences for all of humanity." Whatever came after naturalism had to at once oppose the "mechanistic man of naturalism" and "explore the psychological realm always in its necessary relation with conditions of modernity."[4] Interestingly, Paek's vision of the future of literature did not entail a rejection of technologized media. On the contrary, by applying the "three-dimensionality" of the "modern mechanical civilization" as well as its "beauty, speed, pleasure and visuality" and by "synthesizing reality" from the "techniques of modern arts" such as "cinema and television," literature would be able to advance a "powerful creative technique."[5] Paek's dream was for literature to aspire to a unifying subjectivity that could reconcile the extremes of externally-oriented naturalism and internally-oriented existentialism *and* integrate the strengths of all available media for a new literature. In other words, in order to produce a more harmonious human subjectivity, literature would have to overcome the limits of naturalism, and this meant it would have to draw from the technical resources of contemporary media forms.

[4] Paek Ch'ŏl, "What Comes After Naturalism" *Munhak Yesul*, January 1956, 121-122.
[5] Ibid., 122.

In this chapter, I explore ways in which postwar literary critics and fiction writers were thinking through the problematic of technical visuality and the urban sensorium and their relationship with everyday life in literature. These reflections unfolded within a context of elite print culture's anxious position vis-à-vis popular media of the era, even while (as I have shown in Chapter 1) literary reportage in the post-liberation and postwar period forged collaborative relationships to produce a socially-engaged mosaic of shared spatio-temporality. By and large, postwar literature held a deeply ambivalent, if not explicitly critical attitude, towards the decadence of consumerism and excessive sensuality of American popular culture. Yet such attitudes did not prevent writers from drawing from the sensorial dynamism of cinema, dance hall culture, or life on the street besieged by commodities on display to enrich the rhetorical resources of literature. What I will show in this chapter is that writers of both older and younger generations (despite the often rancorous generational rivalry and ceaseless *ad hominem* attacks among them in critical discourse) were largely in agreement about the fact that postwar *saenghwal* was undergoing a deep crisis. Their critical attitudes were expressed through sustained attention paid to modes of urban sensorium and mediated visuality that surrounded their characters' everyday lives. I propose framing such articulations within the postwar literary field in South Korea as being symptomatic of a broader intermedial process Andreas Huyssen has called "remediation in reverse," describing "moments when an older medium reasserts itself by critically working through what the new medium does and does not do."[6]

As we have seen with Paek Ch'ŏl, literary naturalism functioned as a significant epochal signpost for writers of this generation. As a mode of representation, naturalism was conceived by Chang Yonghak (a name which has come to be nearly synonymous with "existentialist literature" of the postwar period) to be emblematic of a mechanical and scientistic worldview,

[6] Andreas Huyssen, *Miniature Metropolis*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 8.

which had to be overcome. Kim Tongni, despite being a very different kind of writer and thinker from Chang, also saw naturalism as severely limited—a product of a bleak, godless worldview that constrained literature within the realm of the surface. That such different writers would mobilize against a common enemy, albeit in straw-man form, was indicative of crucial ontological and aesthetic shifts underway in the intellectual discourse. I will show in this chapter how the dissatisfaction with naturalism was in fact a stand-in for a dissatisfaction with *saenghwal*, its representation, and the underlying contradictions of social, economic, and political conditions that comprised postwar modernity in South Korea.

Interestingly, the evaluation of postwar literary field over the years has tended to focus on its political or ideological shortcomings, rather than emphasizing the ongoing ontological and aesthetic contestations. Postwar literature has been portrayed as wallowing in defeatism, deterioration and decay or indulging in sensorial decadence and de-politicized abstraction. Critic Kim Hyŏn, for example, in his "Literature of Terrorism" (1971) famously described the literature of the 1950s as afflicted by deep confusion over language and sensibility (*chŏngsŏ*) as a result of liberation and the Korean War. A gap subsequently opened up between "ideology" (*inyŏm*) and "expression" (*p'yohyŏn*), so that "admiration for abstract normativity" took precedence over "cool-headed awareness and judgment of concrete reality."[7] For Kim, the mentality that one "could not be responsible for one's own historical situation" led to a skeptical attitude towards one's own society, which generated "abstract reasoning that could be neither confirmed nor verified" and a "terrorism of logic."[8] Many subsequent evaluations have more-or-less echoed this position. Kim Yunsik generalizes that despite its variety in style and themes, "postwar novels tended to avoid concrete investigation of reality (*hyŏnsil*) and wandered through timeless

[7]Kim Hyŏn, "T'erŏrijŭm-ŭi munhak" [literature of terrorism], *Munhakgwa chisŏng* 2, no. 2 (Summer 1971): 339.
[8] Ibid., 351.

abstractions like a maze."[9] Pak Tonggyu emphasizes the "nihilistic attitude" towards the self brought on by "families scattered by war, death, and destruction of the body…the loss of the very basis and ground for *saenghwal.*"[10] Song Hach'un argues that the newer generation (*shinsedae*) writers such as Son Ch'angsŏp, Chang Yonghak, Kim Sŏnghan, Sŏn Uhwi, and O Sangwŏn, who debuted in the post-liberation period or after the Korean War, emphasized "negativity" (*pujŏng*), "resistance," and "hostility," while looking to Western literature for inspiration and influence.[11] More recent scholars, however, have tried to restore the cultural-political significance of discursive strategies of the 1950s literary field. For example, Hughes sees existentialism of the period as providing a critique of "postcolonial ethnonationalism," denationalization of "body and affect," and the delinking of "human sovereignty from territorial integrity,"[12] while Chang Sŏnggyu sees in Pak Yŏnhŭi's fiction contestations against the division system without resorting to the ethnonationalist position, what Chang argues to be a legacy of leftist realism from KAPF (Korea Artista Proleta Federatio) from the colonial period.[13]

While the politically and ideologically oriented evaluations condemn 1950s literature for its evasive indulgence in abstraction, nihilism, and negativity, what I show in this chapter is that some of the major critical voices of the period (such as Paek Ch'ŏl, Chang Yonghak, Ch'oe Ilsu, and Kim Tongni) were attempting to articulate alternatives to the hegemonic naturalist epistemology of *saenghwal*, to fundamentally re-negotiate how reality itself was being

[9] Kim goes on to fault this wandering for "the inability to establish a narrative form" during this period. Yet he does point to the works of Yi Hoch'ŏl, Ch'oe Ilnam, Kang Sinjae, Pak Kyŏngni, Kim Sŏnghan and Sŏ Kiwŏn for "opening up" this kind of closedmindeness, foretelling a "new stage" of literary history. See Kim Yunsik, *Hanguk sosŏlsa* [History of South Korean fiction], (Sŏul-si: Munhakdongne, 2000), 372-378.
[10] Pak Tonggyu, *Han'gukchŏnhumunhagŭi punsŏkchŏng yŏn'gu*, (Sŏul-si:Wŏrin, 1999), 23.
[11] Song Hach'un and Yi Namho, eds., *1950nyŏndae-ŭi sosŏlgadŭl* [fiction writers of the 1950s], (Nanam Communications, 1993), 14-19.
[12] Theodore Hughes, *Freedom's Frontier: Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 106.
[13] Chang Sŏnggyu, "Riŏllijŭm munhak-ŭi yŏnsoksŏnggwa chŏnhumunhak-ŭi chaeinsik: Pak Yŏnhŭi-ron*"* [The continuity of realism and new understanding of postwar literature: on Pak Yŏnhŭi], Uri'munhak'yŏn'gu 27 [Studies of Korean Literature] (June 2009): 269-294.

represented through artistic modes of expression. The awareness of medium-specificity that Paek shows in "What Comes After Naturalism" is particularly instructive for us in this chapter, since it allows us to situate this negotiation of everyday life across a field of intermedial competition within a new historical conjuncture: a post-colonial and postwar re-configuration of what has been commonly described within the context of colonial modernity as a "crisis of representation."

Chris Hanscom, in his study of the 1930s literary modernists of colonial Korea, has stated that "crisis of representation"—that is, "fall" of language from transparent referentiality—had major consequences for philosophy, aesthetics and historicism. He frames literary modernism as "both a creative response to referential crisis and as symptomatic of a loss of faith in larger narratives that relied on communicative models of language and the world that these presuppose."[14] After the Korean War, however, the South Korean cultural field faced a set of challenges that went beyond the epistemological dimension of the crisis of representation, emerging from on-going post-colonial, Cold War, and intermedial tensions. Terms such as "difficult literature" and "ivory-tower literature" were not simply problems of cultivation and literacy, but expressions of anxiety arising from the consciousness of the post-colonial instability of the Korean script itself,[15] and responses to impinging forces of competing media formations which were perceived to be cultural manifestations of U.S. hegemony in South Korea. Moreover,

[14] Christopher P. Hanscom, *The Real Modern: Literary Modernism and the Crisis of Representation in Colonial Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 25.
[15] For better understanding this linguistic crisis, Kim Hyŏn's "Literature of Terrorism" is illuminating. Kim writes, "The difficulty was that the task of encountering a thing, understanding and critiquing it unfolded in Japanese, but in the process of rendering this in your work had to be done in Korean. This led to a phenomenon of alienation between thought (*sago*) and expression (*p'yohyŏn*). See Kim Hyŏn, "T'erŏrijŭm-ŭi," 338.

the issue of readability and the problem of absorption (i.e. attention) were often touched on by a host of writers and critics of this period.[16]

The epistemological dimension of crisis of representation—the unbridgeable gap between language and reality—can also distract from a related problematic[17] of modernity whose effects were likely felt by ordinary people beyond the realm of elite, intellectual discourse: that is, the uncertain relationship between human beings and commodities in an impoverished postwar society. (In other words, the politics of representation, which art wages through the act of making visible, risks being elided by overemphasizing the epistemology of representation.) Eleanna Kim, for example, has shown how the Syngman Rhee regime "objectified" South Korean children as orphans, utilizing them as "vehicles of economic aid."[18] Meanwhile, the commodification of Korean women's bodies through sex work played an important role of providing a means of survival for many impoverished families[19] and as a way of introducing foreign capital into the domestic economy. In Chapter 1, we saw how both photographic journalism and artistic

[16] The following is just a small sampling of such cases: critic Pang Kihwan calls Chang Yonghak and Yi Muyŏng's work "almost unreadable" while praising Ch'oe Inuk's work as "gliding along wonderfully. You don't trip over a thing. It was considerably pleasurable for the fatigued eye." (See Pang Kihwan, "Harmony's Powerful Sensations," *Tonga Ilbo,* July 28, 1955.) Even the editors of *Sebyŏk* who mostly praised Chang's "Yohansijip" express some measured ambivalence about his "poetic sentences that pathologically avoids the prosaic mode" and worry that "the theoretical leaps were too severe, and the overuse of epigrams blurred the work's central point." (See Editors, "Metaphysical Novel," 244.) In the same vein, critic Yi Ŏryŏng critiques Pak Yonggu's "The Move" at the level of the sentence. Rhythm, speed and variety, Yi says, are crucial. If "the opening sentences" do not align with the "reader's breathing," then the work is "disqualified." He complains that no matter how much he read about the three main characters, he could not call up a "concrete image" of who they were. After attacking treatment of events and the unfolding of scenes as "superficial" and "linear," he wonders archly, "it makes one wonder how such writing would look if faithfully adapted into a film." See Yi Ŏryŏng, "Literature in May: From The Standpoint of the Sentence," *Munhak Yesul*, June 1957, 170-172.

[17] The relationship between the problem of language vs. reality and human beings vs. things can be traced back to the false emancipatory promise of enlightenment. The "crisis of representation" was a crisis because it called into question the very premise of enlightenment logic, as the chain from proper representation to enlightened action was severed.

[18] Kim argues that children with parents were labeled as orphans, then identified as "adoptable," and transferred to new families, serving the state as a strategy for acquiring economic aid. See Eleanna Kim, *Adopted Territory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 71.

[19] Perhaps the canonical literary text of the period dealing with this painful reality is Yi Pŏmsŏn's "Stray Bullet" (*Obalt'an*) published in *Hyŏndae Munhak* in October 1959. In 1961, the story was adapted into a widely-acclaimed film of the same name by director Yu Hyŏnmok. See Chapter 5 for further discussion of the story and film.

photography were attracted to public sites of social and commercial exchange such as alleyways, streets, train stations, and outdoor markets, how, in particular, the camera-eye turned to representing the influx of commodities and "foreign" media as composite images: fashionable apparel behind window displays, movie posters on walls, cigarettes and lighters meticulously laid out on a street vendor's tray. Literary works too were focusing on the effect of foreign commodities in South Korean society, especially as they circulated midst broken, disabled bodies ravaged by war and poverty. Reading the photographs of Han Yŏngsu (discussed in the previous chapter) alongside the literary works of Nam Chŏnghyŏn and Ha Kŭnch'an, for example, brings to sharp relief how artists and writers of the era were thinking through the relationship between the body, the commodity, and the image, within overlapping regimes of neo-colonialism and global capitalism. In addition to Nam and Ha, the latter half of the chapter explores short fiction by Yi Muyŏng, Kim Kwangju, and Kim Kwangsik, whose works were informed by or consciously appropriated modes of visuality from other media to enrich and complicate the literary narrative form and the experiential modality of everyday life. A key motif in their stories is a recurrence of "dizziness" (*hyŏn'gijŭng*) or a loss of visual orientation that afflicts at a moment of crisis when the naturalized "everyday eye" predicated on identitarian (gender, class, nation) or ontological (scientific-philosophical) foundation is overturned.

Existentialism and the Disavowal of the Everyday Eye

"Existentialism" (*siljon*) was a cultural buzzword of the postwar era. Somewhat like "liberty" (*chayu*)—another philosophically-loaded term that was vulgarized and ironized through unsystemic overuse[20] (its meaning was hard to pin down precisely because of its imprecise and

[20] After considering the various popular usages of the term "chayu," Kwon argues that the paradigm of developmental democracy ruled the 1950s idea of freedom. Kwŏn Podurae, *Ap'ŭregŏl sasanggyerŭl ikta*

often parodic application), the proliferation of the term was indicative of a broader shift within the intellectual sphere towards European philosophers like Heidegger, Sartre, Camus and Jaspers [Figure 16].

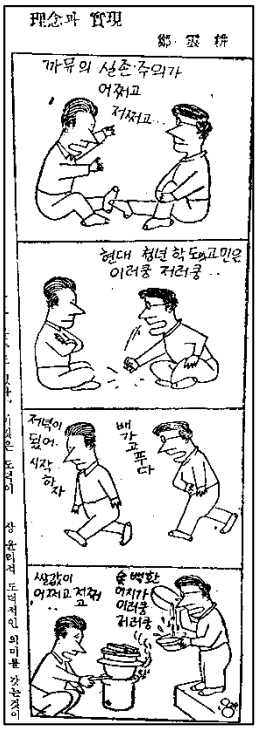

Figure 16. "Ideology and Reality" by Chŏng Un'kyŏng. Two men sit around engaged in intellectual debate. One says, "Camus's existentialism blablabla," and the other answers, "Today's young students are worried about blablabla." When dinner time comes, they argue in the same manner about rice prices. Chŏng's piece appears to poke fun at the comically incongruous gap between the lofty discourse of "ideology" (inyŏm) and the drab, unglamorous "reality" (hyŏnsil) of postwar everyday life.
Source: *Hyŏndae*

Articles of translations and explicatory essays appeared in major journals of the period such as *Shinch'ŏnji, Sebyŏk*, and *Sasanggye*, and functioned as a counter-discourse to the hegemonic formation of the U.S.-sponsored "postwar enlightenment subject," a figure of democratic politics and sensibility, positivist and scientific worldview, endowed with the self-initiative to bring continual improvement to oneself, one's community, and the nation. Such a figure was an ideal championed by U.S. aid organizations, ROK's Ministry of Education (especially embodied in

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1950nyŏndae munhwaŭi chayuwa t'ongje (Sŏul-si: Tongguktaehakkyoch'ulp'anbu, 2009), 100.

educational programs like *Saegyoyuk*), Fundamental Education Centers and Community Development programs. For the postwar enlightenment subject, the world was not inherently "absurd," as the existentialists claimed; it was merely in a state of disorder and stagnation, which was a symptom of ignorance and an improper organization of one's daily life. While "existentialism" seemed to valorize the internal struggles of an individual estranged from the world, postwar enlightenment subject, while individualist in orientation, was encouraged to become socially and democratically mobilized. It was predicated on a certain vision of everyday life that was inherently developmentalist. Greater credence would be given to the notion of egalitarianism, which meant the older logic of legitimizing colonial rule on the basis of racial-culturalist narratives would be cast aside, at least at the level of official discourse. Militating against the developmentalist ontology of the postwar enlightenment subject, existentialist literature tended to privilege the subjectivity of a de-mobilized, socially estranged (male) individuals. The devastation of the Korean War and the socio-economic realities of ROK under Syngman Rhee's corrupt, autocratic rule provided a convenient backdrop for down-and-out characters. The aesthetic of the grotesque often entered these works, abounding with images of damaged, deteriorating or dead bodies, conveying an almost necrophilic vitality.

O Sangwŏn, Han Malsuk, Son Ch'angsŏp, and Chang Yonghak were just some of the major writers of the period who (though it would be inaccurate to describe the entirety of their oeuvre as being informed by existentialism) were observed by critics as having existentialist tendencies. In one of the few manifestos describing the value of the existentialist approach, Chang Yonghak, whose writing was considered to be emblematic of the existentialist fiction, offered a critique of what he characterized as "the everyday eye" (*ilsangjŏk nun*). In the wake of his critically acclaimed short story, the editors of *Sebyŏk* ("Dawn"), in their response to Chang

Yonghak's "The Poetry of John" (*Yohansijip*), commented on two distinct approaches towards *saenghwal* that could be found among contemporary writers.

> The fiction of most Korean writers deals with the '*Living'* of a human being. However, Chang Yong-hak discusses the '*Life'* of a human being. '*Living'* and '*Life'* constitute different forms of *saenghwal*. '*Living'* is a concrete form of *saenghwal*, such as eating, attending school, paying taxes, getting married. But '*Life'* refers to a spiritual *saenghwal,* such as religion or philosophy. If the former is a physical form of *saenghwal*, than the latter is a metaphysical form.[21]

We see here a re-assertion of the spiritual-material binary that has informed the discourse of *saenghwal* from the 1920s onward in Japan and Korea, as discussed in the introductory chapter of the dissertation. The vitalistic element of *saenghwal* is captured in religion, philosophy, metaphysics, the spiritual, whereas its material aspect is described in terms of the concrete, the physical and practices of the everyday (eating, paying taxes, etc.). Chang's work was said to "break up" (*haech'e*) the modern novel by focusing on "interiority" and "philosophy" rather than "plot" and "events."

In "Sentimental Remarks," where Chang comments on the aesthetic and philosophical divide between the old guard and the post-Korean War generation, the notion of *saenghwal* was conceptually tied to the notion of reality (*hyŏnsil*). Chang rejected naturalism, but he was careful to say that the rejection of naturalism was not the same as a wholesale rejection of reality. "Naturalist reality," he wrote, "is not the only kind of reality. It is not only the reality that appears to the everyday eye (*ilsangjŏk nun)* that counted as reality."[22] Interestingly, he linked the dynamite—a nineteenth century invention—to the ontological regime of "scientism" and went on to say the reality from the time of dynamite was not suited for the reality from the time of the

[21] Editors, "The Possibility of a Metaphysical Novel: On Chang Yonghak's 'Yohansijip'," *Saeby*ŏk, August 1960, 243-244.
[22] Chang Yong-hak, "Sentimental Remarks," *Munhak Yesul*, September 1956, 174.

"atom bomb and myth."[23] In the nineteenth century, people lived within a "natural environment," whereas now, people lived within a "mechanism." Under these terms, it was the older generation who were the "sentimentalist" and the new generation of writers who were "realist."[24] In other words, Chang's modernism was not a wholesale rejection of reality, but a declaration that the atomic age calls for a new way of conceptualizing the real.[25]

Literary critic Ch'oe Ilsu, however, was not satisfied with the picture of reality presented by the existentialist writers such as Chang.[26] His position also hinged on a particular articulation of the relationship between *saenghwal*, reality and art. According to Ch'oe, the younger writers were addressing only the narrow preoccupation of urban intellectuals, and failed to provide "a faithful diagram of the people's *(minjok*) *saenghwal*" at a time when the people seek to resolve the problem of national division.[27] What was needed was "a complete account of *saenghwal*" which themes of existentialist literature were failing to address. The latter were overly concerned with "the element of the spirit in its trivial struggle for consciousness and action," a theme which displaced "a reality that seeks national unification." We get a better sense of what is meant by this "reality" in "Literature and the Masses," where Ch'oe articulated a need for a historically engaged literature for the people that rejects both the excessive interiority and the "conceptual fantasies" of the "ivory-tower pure literature" and the base vulgarity of popular literature

[23] See Chapter 5 for more on the postwar atomic era.
[24] Chang, "Sentimental Remarks," 174-175.
[25] Critic Cho Yŏnhyŏn, in the same vein as Chang Yonghak, situates reality beyond the "everyday eye." Reality (*hyŏnsilsŏng*), rather than some phenomenological actuality before the eye, is a fundamental reality (*riarit'i*). He also defines the notion of an epoch (*sidaesŏng*), not as a phenomenological trend, but as a fundamental spirit of the times (*sidaejŏngsin)*. Cho Yŏnhyŏn, "Reality and Epoch," *Munhak Yesul*, April 1954, 88.
[26] Ch'oe Ilsu, "Unified Criticism of Existentialist Literature," *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun*, April 13, 1955.
[27] In a later article, Ch'oe claims, "Just as concrete representation of modes of *saenghwal* cannot be rigidly set in terms of law-like reactions between ideas and practice, indigenous sentiments of the nation (*minjokgamjŏng*) cannot be reduced to psychological mechanism of stream-of-consciousness." This reveals Ch'oe's post-colonial realist assumptions: both *saenghwal* and the national sentiment are categories of "the real," which language must strive to represent. The modernist technique (i.e. "stream-of-consciousness") is seen not as constructive or experimental—bringing forth new realities and experiences—but simply mechanical, oversimplified and obfuscatory. See Ch'oe Ilsu, "The Position of the New Generation Within Our Literature" *Munhak Yesul*, February 1956, 118.

(*t'ongsok munhak*).[28] Ch'oe's attack of existentialist literature hinged on what kind of reality he privileges. This can be seen in his positive descriptions of writers who emerge from the "self-conscious masses":

> For these writers, before they try envisioning the eternal, they seek out the historical reality before their eyes (lit. "crashing into their eyes"), and before they search for the essence of human nature, they think about how human beings of the present era might be enlightened, so that they cannot indulge themselves in an ivory-tower literature, and they will not be immersed in a popular literature that focuses on nostalgia, sentiment, sensation and shallow intrigue, without a creative meaning or the objective content of *saenghwal*.[29]

For Ch'oe, the "popular" (*t'ongsok*) and the "mass" (*taejung*) should not be conflated; the former was pejorative while the latter had historically redemptive potential. Liberation day (August 15, 1945) became a privileged historical event when students, soldiers, scholars, artists, merchants were mobilized based on a set of common experiences under the Japanese occupation: "Such an experience endows one with the *saenghwal* content that must be depicted by mass literature."[30] While Ch'oe's agenda for national literature was post-colonial in orientation, he was also thinking about the role Korean literature will play on a global stage. This was given as another key reason why writers must reject insularity of self-indulgent interiority (which he attributes to "ivory-tower literature) to engage in historical reality, so that "civilization can go beyond its narrow confines and extend towards the rest of the universe (*uju*)."[31] Collective s*aenghwal* would function as a medium to link the limitations of individual experience with a broader historical process that was not only national but global.

Here I am teasing out this universalizing tendency in Ch'oe's vision of national literature to underscore its unlikely affinity with Chang Yonghak's vision of the universal. In "Sentimental

[28] Ch'oe Ilsu, "Literature and the Masses," *Sasanggye*, February 1958, 108-116.
[29] Ibid., 112.
[30] Ibid., 112.
[31] Ibid., 108.

Remarks," Chang critiqued those who accused the new generation of simply imitating the West by pointing to the Korean War as a definitive event that has rendered such complaints obsolete, describing the conflict as "a collision between world history's two major tidal currents."[32] There can no longer be any purist conception of the national culture, Chang seemed to suggest; the construction of national literature will require the combination of "Western way of thinking" (*sagobangsik*) and "national way of feeling" (*chŏngsŏ*).[33] While Chang's existentialism argued for a conscious visual turn away from concrete, material everydayness and the importance of art to transcend its period, he still relied on the world-historical significance of the Korean War to disarm the old guard's criticism that the postwar writers were merely imitating the West. In other words, his license to make the transhistorical leap in art was articulated on historical grounds, based on a supposed shift in ontological regime—from the positivist era of the dynamite to the mythic era of the atom bomb.

These competing universalisms[34] within the literary field can be understood as being symptomatic of crisis of representation that rose from post-colonial, Cold War and intermedial tensions.[35] Terms such as "difficult literature" and "ivory-tower literature," which appeared frequently in critical writing during this period, were not simply problems of education and literacy, but expressions of post-colonial anxiety arising from consciousness of the instability of

[32] Chang, "Sentimental Remarks," 174.
[33] Ibid., 174.
[34] What I am calling "competing universalisms" Travis Workman formulates within the colonial context of the 1920s and 1930s as the reconfiguration of civilization/enlightenment discourse of the years of the Korean Empire into three competing modes of "genus-being" that is mediated by culture: "moral genus-being of culturalism," "productive genus-being of Marxism," and "nation-state subjectivity" in imperial nationalism. See Travis Workman *Imperial Genus: The Formation and Limits of the Human in Modern Korea and Japan* (Berkley: University of California, 2015), 14.
[35] The crisis of representation in the 1950s should be understood within a broader context of crisis of modernity, which was a key element of the late-1930s Pan-Asianist discourse. While critiques of Western modernity and its civilizational ills continued through the postwar-1950s, alongside calls for modernization and development, Chang Sejin, drawing from Ch'a Sŭnggi's scholarship, differentiates the two periods. In the late-1930s, Western ideas of individualism, humanism, democracy and the free market had surrendered their universal status. While echoes of these critiques continued well through the post-Korean War 1950s, Western universalism had regained its footing under American cultural hegemony. See Chang Sejin, *Imagined America* (Sŏul: P'urŭnyŏksa, 2012), 319.

the Korean script itself,[36] and responses to the impinging forces of other competing media formations which were perceived to be cultural manifestations of U.S. hegemony in South Korea. It is within this context that Chang Yonghak's disavowal of the "everyday eye" should be understood. By positing a break from the naturalist tradition, Chang claimed, "while the naturalist method was to expend a thousand characters to depict a single finger, our method lies in expressing a thousand characters with a single finger."[37] Within the naturalist mode of representation, words had to labor to approximate the overflowing richness of the actual, but now, the "finger"—a single word, properly situated—could be elevated to a status of eloquent myth. Chang made the same move, in fact, in his explication of why a modern novel's "title" (*chemyŏng*) ought to be regarded with a sense of piety: an attempt to invest the literary word with religiosity.[38] The turn towards the symbol or myth, in other words, was not simply a turn away from "the everyday eye"; it was also a disavowal of the post-colonial anxiety about the national vernacular and the ever-growing problem of competition for attention midst new forms of audio-visual technics.

Kim Tongni's Vitalistic Materialism and the Re-sacralization of Human *Saenghwal*

If Chang Yonghak privileged interiority and abstraction as a way of moving away from the mechanistic representation of everyday life, Kim Tongni offered another alternative. In both his fiction and criticism, Kim launched a forceful and coherent vision for literary representation that could "protect the humanity of man" and could capture the essence of "human life" (*in'gan*

[36] Ch'oe, "Literature and the Masses," 108.
[37] Chang, "Sentimental Remarks," 175.
[38] Chang, Yong-hak, "The State of Contemporary Literature," *Tonga Ilbo*, 1959.5, 8-9.

saenghwal) that transcends politics and historical periodicity.[39] While he is commonly remembered for his adversarial position against leftist political literature (or what he would call the "literature of the party"), he is just as illuminating for his attacks against Yi Hyosŏk and Kim Tong'in. Upon first glance, neither of these writers appear to be convenient targets for Kim Tongni: Yi is popularly remembered as a nativist writer (a selective memory that elides Yi's early-career leftist fellow-traveler works) and Kim Tong'in as an early pioneer of "pure literature." What emerges from Kim Tongni's criticism of the writers is his diligent contempt for naturalism as mechanical, superficial, and ontologically impoverished.

In "The Prosaic and the Anti-Prosaic: On Yi Hyosŏk," Kim believes with the story "Human Prose," Yi has "betrayed" the novel form. Yi's description of the "dizzying" streetscape resembling a "trashcan," for Kim, is a betrayal of the city streets, which is "the proper domain of prose" and "the hometown of literary fiction." Kim sees something merely gestural, insufficient[40] and crudely simplistic in Yi Hyosŏk's turn to the countryside in "When the Buckwheat Flowers Bloom" (also published in 1936), in which Yi fulfills through literature the desire to become one with the "the whitlow grass, plantain, dandelion, to change into the very field itself, to assimilate into nature."[41] Kim claims that "one of the fundamental problems of the century" is the inability of science and prose of "the dizzying streets" to guarantee "the ultimate significance of human *saenghwal*." Yi's turn to nativism, then, was a rejection of prose to escape into the "bosom of

[39] In "The Subjectivity of Literary Thought (*sasang*) and Its Environment: Towards the Basis for the Content of Serious Literature," Kim insists he is not trying to exclude the idea of "public good" (*kongli*) as one of literature's virtues. He states, rather, that serious literature should not be limited to politics or historical reality. For him, "literature is a literary expression of literary thought" which means that "all literature has an ideological character (*sasangsŏng*)" which can express "the ultimate" within human *saenghwal*. For example, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* is a work that expresses "the ultimate of human passion," which then becomes the "ideological character" of Tolstoy's novel. In "Literature and Politics," Kim writes that both politics and literature are part of human *saenghwal*. The problem arises when literature is understood to serve politics. He wants to preserve the autonomy of literature. See Kim Tongni, *Munhakgwa In'gan,* 72-83, 139.

[40] Kim writes that Yi's prose in "When the Buckwheat Flowers Bloom" adds no new knowledge or affection: "We have already encountered more truth about nature through Laozi's works."

[41] Kim Tongni, *Munhakgwa In'gan*, 34-35

poetry," but Kim Tongni feels Yi's efforts would have been better served towards "a rapid transfiguration of science and prose." Instead of "some simple exaltation of nature, which would be a retreat to poetry," Kim called for a *revitalization of prose* through the discovery of a "god with a new character" that would restore the sacred to "human *saenghwal.*" While Kim is critical of the ontological limitations of "science and prose" (his repeated coupling of these terms indicates how he conceives of literature as both ontological and technical), his vision for the future of literature was a revolution in prose that would re-admit some new form of divinity that would invest everyday life with transcendent significance.

In "The Limit of Naturalism: On Kim Tong'in," Kim Tongni portrayed naturalism as both a mode of representation and a philosophy of being. Its descriptions were "superficial" rather than "three-dimensional," they did not "soar towards the sky" but "were spread thin over the earth." It was linked to "futility behind the mechanization of humanity, the loss of God, superstition and idols." While the dethroning of God was supposed to ensure "possession of the skies," humanity was instead robbed of "the boundlessness of celestial bodies and the infinity of time." This source of the infinite should be positioned as a centripetal force within human *saenghwal*. According to Kim Tongni, the evacuation of the sacred from everyday life manifested itself in the "superficial spirit," "obscenity," and "madness" that was rampant in Kim Tong'in's fiction. The latter was described, from "The Sorrow of the Weak" (1919) to "The Tale of Kim Yŏnsil" (1939) as having been "consistently naturalist" and "cut off from God."[42] Commenting on works such as "Fiery Sonata" (1930) and "Story of a Mad Painter" (1935), Kim Tongni remarked that the association of "evil and criminal acts" with artistic inspiration simply draws from the works of Wilde, Baudelaire and Poe, and is by now "part of our common sense."

[42] Kim Tongni, *Munhakgwa In'gan*, 17.

The fits of madness portrayed in these works were the logical outcome of "modern man" who had lost "the sense of the infinite."

Another aspect of Kim Tongni's metaphysics that is implied in his dismissal of naturalism is his vitalistic organicism, which eventually evolves to a vitalistic developmentalist position.[43] He defined literature as a "form of life (*saeng*) that is the ultimate." "Doing literature" was a form of living, a way to channel one's "organic relation with the heaven and earth," and understanding this "common fate" that binds everyone in an "organic relationship," and "aim towards its unfolding." Failure to act meant one was bound to remain an "eternal fragment," and deprived of experiencing how one was actually "the alter ego" of heaven and earth, and without this experience, one's life (*saeng*) "cannot be assimilated into heaven and earth."[44] His vitalistic organicism takes on historical ramifications in Kim's critique of Marxist dialectical materialism. If Marx claims, "the mode of production of the material basis of *saenghwal* determines the social, political and spiritual process of *saenghwal*," Kim turns the hierarchy upside down by claiming, "In human *saenghwal*, it is the *desire for freedom and advancement* that determines the process of social, political and material life" (my emphasis). This "desire for freedom and advancement" is none other that vitality (*saengmyŏng*), which is neither spiritual nor material, but *prior* to both. Nature becomes the primordial reservoir of vitality out of which both spirit and matter can rise.[45]

Kim's understanding of literature as not only a form of representation but a type of practice ("doing literature" is a form of living) must be situated in relationship with his theory of humanism, which he sees in three stages. The first was the humanism of antiquity, represented by the philosophy of ancient Greeks who privileged the rational and the ideal. Renaissance

[43] Kim criticizes Kim Tong'in's "Story of a Mad Painter" (1935) for having chosen to focus on "the organization of materiality of the body" rather than "the soul and the spark in the spirit of vitality (*saengmy*ŏng). See Kim Tongni, *Munhakgwa In'gan*, 16.
[44] Ibid., 88.
[45] Ibid., 116-117.

humanism, the second stage, brought about the scientific revolution, and while dispensing with "medieval regulation of the sacred," enthroned a new idol of science, with its philosophy of determinism and materialism, privileging a mechanistic worldview. The third stage of humanism, which Kim links to thinkers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Hesse, and Mann, emphasized individuality, freedom, and the dignity of humanity. Kim sees national literature (*minjok munhak*) as positioned to play an important world-historical role in the development of Third Humanism, which must address the "defects of capitalist mechanism" and the "formalism of dialectical materialism's schematic worldview."[46] Within this framework, national literature is not simply local or regional literature but universal in that it engages in the fundamental task of "pure literature" which is to "protect the humanity of man." The formulation of pure literature=national literature is possible because Kim understands "nationalism to be humanism on a national level." This was also a way for Kim to side with democratic ideals of the Free World while critiquing the materialist aspects of capitalism. It was the increasing democratization throughout the world that allowed the "liberation of the national spirit" (which, for Kim, is the same thing as the liberation of the human spirit).[47] The task of pure literature, then, was to protect the humanity of that newly liberated national spirit.

Kim Tongni's critical ontology turned towards mythification as an attempt to restore dignity and godliness to the secularized and profaned modern world. This entailed privileging literature as a site of re-sacralization of *saenghwal*. His recurring use of the term "human *saenghwal*" was meant to delve into the essential core of human experience that took ontological precedence over social, economical and political circumstances that shaped modern existence. His conception of *saenghwal*, then, was not as concerned with a heightened sense of

[46] Ibid., 115.
[47] Ibid., 96-97.

consciousness or an in-depth investigation into one's interiority in the name of individual authenticity. It attempted to lay claim to an ontological totality over the historical totality that was implied in the *saenghwal* of Marx's universal history. He believed that literature should try to capture life in its "ultimate" (*kugyŏng*, 究竟) form, a position that would be re-articulated in the post-liberation years. When Kim was critiqued by critic Cho Yŏnhyŏn for holding what was deemed to be an overtly religious conception of literature, he replied that "the ultimate life" (*kugyŏngjŏk sam*) could be lived through literature, philosophy, politics or education. Rather than "overspecialize" life into separate professions, he claimed the emphasis should be placed on how to "live more genuinely, loftily, beautifully, deeply."[48] He also addressed the question of the difference between literature and religion by claiming that while religion offered up an embodied god or gods in whose name one had to follow specific forms of obedience, devotion and ritual, literature provided a way for every individual to "acquire a new god," a way to find god through oneself.[49] (In this sense, despite his vitalistic organicist position, he did not surrender the importance of the individual for the reader or the writer.)

What is perhaps most interesting about Kim's choice of Yi Hyosŏk and Kim Tong'in as targets of critique is that they shared different aspects of Kim Tongni's own style, aesthetic and thematic occupations. For many, Kim Tongni would be remembered for his stories of rural space (*hyangt'o*) such as in "Record of the Red Earth" (Hwangt'ogi), "Portrait of a Shaman" (*Munyŏdo*), and "Post-Horse" (*Yŏngma*), and yet Yi Hyosŏk's effort to turn towards rural scenes dissatisfied Kim. Likewise, in discussing Kim Tong'in's oeuvre, rather than celebrating the art-for-art-sake ethos they both shared, Kim Tongni chose to criticize what he saw to be an obscene naturalism delighting in representing a dark, lurid world without god. This critical temperament

[48] Kim Tongni, "Way of Thinking about Doing Literature," *Paengmin,* March 1948, 45.
[49] Kim Tongni, *Munhakgwa In'gan*, 89.

(which Freud might have diagnosed as a narcissism of small differences), I believe, informed his reflexive dismissal of the so-called "existentialist" writers in the 1950s for its own brand of modernist extremism. Kim Tongni's "human *saenghwal*" and the "existentialist" literature's turn away from the "everyday eye" both entailed a rejection of the ontology and aesthetic legacies of naturalism.

Urban Visuality in Crisis: The Meaning of Disorientation in Kim Kwangsik's Fiction

If the literary criticism of Chang Yonghak and Kim Tongni was engaging with delineating the ontological and aesthetic limits of naturalism, what about actual works of literature of the postwar years? As we already saw in the beginning of this chapter, Paek Ch'ŏl felt that the legacy of naturalism was very much visible in contemporary literature. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will show the ways in which writers of this period were calling into question the very fabric of domestic life, transportation, work, and leisure, that constituted the mediated experience of urban reality. The visuality of everyday life played a crucial role in this interrogation process, which entailed the recurring critiques of suffocating regimes of scientism, functionalism, and rationalism.

Central among such writers is Kim Kwangsik, who emerged in the literary scene in the postwar era as a major talent. Kim's short stories "Wandering" and "House No. 213" deal centrally with a kind of dizziness, or a loss of orientation, that one is afflicted with while inhabiting a mechanized society. His work deserves special attention in a discussion about postwar urban streets as a place of fleeting, phantasmic contact. His descriptions of street scenes read like citations of streetscape-reportage discussed in Chapter 1, providing vivid, map-like details of what lies where. Much like the assemblage of "fictional" and "factual" images

deployed in the camera-novel, this device allows readers to stage imagined events in real places. And yet, even as this fictional map allows the urban readers to imagine themselves moving through Seoul, there is a tendency in Kim's work to interrupt the free-flow mobility of the flâneur subjectivity with moments of confusion, emotional anguish, moral and epistemic panic. I see this to be an extension, or a fuller fictional elaboration, of the post-colonial anxiety of semi-sovereignty expressed in the genres streetscape-reportage I discussed in Chapter 1.

In "Wandering," a Catholic narrator-protagonist struggles with his attraction to a married woman. A descriptive technique that recurs throughout the story is to convey the object of his attraction as a combination of lines (*sŏn*) that confuses and captivates him.

> Her white hands were pretty. How could a woman's hands be so beautiful? *The line of her white fingers caressed her face. The lines of intellect and passion that flow through her face.* The slightly raised nose, its straight line. It pleased me to think I'd discovered the meticulous eye of the painter within me. I drank from the whiskey glass.
>
> *I tried adding more interpretation*.
>
> The red rose-petal mouth, the slender, ever slender lips, the white, almost translucent skin, large yet narrow eyes*, the heat of her affectionate gaze (sisŏn) seemed to touch the surface* of my flesh. (emphasis added)[50]

This is an ekphrasis of the face, which first appears to him as an image. She is constituted by lines. Even as he takes pleasure in deriving meaning from these lines as an artist with ("eye of the painter within me") he is held captive by them. The process of captivation is described as a deliberate discursive process and as an affect. It is discursive in that it entails translating the image into verbal descriptions, informed by already circulating tropes seen in other stories, newspaper articles, advertisements, film magazines. These words mediate the encounter. There is also the "line" which doubles as a bodily border and a line of sight (*sisŏn*), which generate "heat" and "touches" his flesh. Being seen is described as a haptic encounter between surfaces, which is also embedded with the discursive debris of everyday media consumption.

[50] Kim Kwangsik, *Hwansanggok* [song of illusion], (Sŏul-si: Chŏngŭmsa, 1958), 81.

As the story unfolds, the narrator repeatedly compares his interaction with the woman as something out of a movie. They fire witty banter back-and-forth. A nice delivery of a line makes him feel secretly smug. Moreover, he begins to see himself in terms of a popular film, again using a more old-fashioned metaphor of a "painter."

> The eyes that look back at me.
> Here and now, a twenty-six-year old young man. Clear eyes that want something. Passionate breast. Powerful arms. A man endowed with the will of love who would give anything to this beautiful woman. A handsome man with a modern sensibility.
> *This is how I painted myself*—as someone seen this way in the gaze of this woman. woman.
> Without saying a word, the woman extended a glass to me. I shook my head. *It's a gesture I learned from the movies. I think of this moment now as a scene from a movie.*
> […]
> The woman sets down the glass *like in a scene from a movie*.
> *I felt that we were in some kind of foreign drama* [literally, "translation theater"]
> *Our everyday life* [saenghwal]*, our mind-spirit, our gestures and body language—had they turned Western?* But I didn't think it was such an unnatural thing.[51] (emphasis added)

While the ethos of the story is ultimately critical of the narrator's actions—he eventually succumbs to her seduction and is treated as a "fallen" character in the denouement—we see, even in the midst of his "wandering," that everyday life is interpenetrated with moments of cinematic mimicry[52], in which what is enacted is one's subjectification to Western, mass-mediated culture of the spectacle. There is no clear line of demarcation between fantasy and reality, as the encroachment has occurred at the level of "mind-spirit" (*chŏngsin*) and body language.

Kim's penchant for street scenes becomes perfectly clear when we compare the opening passages of "View from the Chair" and "House No. 213":

> Seoul's streets. An early morning of falling leaves.
> Today, just as any other day, countless buses rushed towards the station in front of

[51] Ibid., 83.
[52] Another example from "Wandering": "It pleased him to slip amongst the bustling crowd in the streets of Myŏngdong. I bought cigarettes. […] In the dark alleyways leading to Chongno, I popped a cigarette in my mouth. *Thinking of a cool pose from the movies, I lit a match and sucked*. Unable to inhale, I only puffed up smoke, and in the end, I was coughing so heavily that I had to throw it out" (emphasis added). See Kim, *Hwansanggok,* 60.

> Chongno's Hwashin department store. As the male and female officer workers squeezed themselves from the buses on the verge of bursting from being overcrowded, they went to their respective work places. Everyday, it was the same time, the same streets.[53]
>
> Quitting Time. The streets of Seoul after five. The streets of Chongno, Ŭlchiro, Sejongno, Namdaemunno, Sogongdong, Myŏngdong. In the wave of people, men and women, young and old, their breaths feel more relaxed.
>
> Once in a while, they catch glimpses of their own reflections on show windows displaying splendid merchandise as they pass by. The potent colors of these extravagant commodities send their eyes into rapture (*hwangholk'ehada*)…[54]

"View from the Chair" depicts Seoul residents on their way to work—the stress of the rush-hour crowd, the grueling repetition of the work life ("the same time, the same streets")—while the opening of "House No. 213" focuses on what happens to this crowd after work. They may appear more "relaxed" but they are soon held captive by "extravagant commodities" and their potent colors. These familiar scenes are stitched together to mobilize the idea of a generic everyday.

> The buses and trolleys they barely managed to get on have no room for moving their feet. Men and women, young and old, their bodies collide, hug and lean, and every time there is a vibration, they push, pull and turn upside down and pounce on one another…but still you have to ride these trolleys and buses.
>
> Today too, after five o'clock, the buses become full and travel to the outskirts, to Shinch'on, Ch'ŏgyangri, Yaksudong, Miari, Tonamdong, Hŭksŏkdong, Sangdodong, carrying husbands as they go from work place to the home,
>
> The engineer Mr. Kim Myŏnghak today, like everyday, after six o'clock, left the factory and took the bus towards Sangdo-dong. His face had a gloomy look about it. Regardless of who jostled and bumped into him, he only shook like a statue and went on his way.[55]

The narrative perspective is omniscient, and the reader encounters Kim Myŏnghak from the outside, as we might encounter the protagonist of a film or a camera-novel. First, we have the wider shot of Seoul, the establishment of place. A character is singled out, shaking "like a statue" on the bus.

> If you go south from Seoul Station and cross the Han River's pedestrian path, and on the left, there was a hilly path that led to Hŭksŏkdong, and to the right, you go around the mountain with the grave of Six Martyred Ministers and there is an asphalt road heading

[53] Kim, *Hwansanggok*, 125.
[54] Ibid., 154.
[55] Ibid., 155.

> towards Yŏngdŭngp'o, lined with Platanus trees casting their shades. If you pass Noryangjin market, to your direct left, there is a broad uphill that you go up as you turn around and around the hillside. The people who go up this hill mornings and nights call this hill Arirang pass. *If we say, 'people over the hill' you might consider them backwoods people, but the people who call these hills Arirang Pass and climb it night and day for the most part have jobs in Seoul as civil workers or office workers—Korea's educated class who wear suits. Someone who goes up on the Arirang Pass for the first time would be surprised.* The wide streets lined thick with Platanus split left and right and there's a rotary much like Hwashin in front of Chongno…[56] (emphasis added)

The narrator invokes a readerly community by calling attention to certain familiar assumptions, stereotypes, and attitudes. The omniscient narrator positions himself as, not so much an all-seeing God, but a conscientious citizen who is paying attention to how Seoul's neighborhoods are changing. By explaining the unfamiliar (a place called Arirang Pass) in terms of the familiar ("much like Hwasin in front of Chongno"), we can infer who the intended readers are.

Of course, Kim's story is much more than a set of directions. Its critical ethos manifests itself more clearly when the well-organized houses of the neighborhood are said to resemble an "armored division" that is "lined up outside a ceremonial hall for the troops"—serving as a reminder that militarized organization has intruded into civilian residential living. Myŏnghak's job as a chief engineer of a "landscape architecture printing corporation" points to an affinity between print production and landscape production. Space and culture are produced from the same mechanical, replicating logic. When Kim is dismissed from his job for a mechanical failure he wonders whether he deserves the blame: "An engineer is a person. People aren't machines that can spot a mechanical breakdown before it occurs. A person cannot be a machine."[57] After getting drunk with a friend, Myŏnghak stumbles into the house of an unknown American, and is mistaken for a thief. Though he is eventually released by the Korean police, he is deeply humiliated.

[56] Ibid., 157-158.
[57] Ibid., 170.

In the final scene, Myŏnghak pretends to be a "blind man" as he walk to his door and places stepping stones on the path to his home so that he would be able to tell where his house is with his eyes closed. Then he brings out a knife and cuts ridges into the handle—"like the handle of a Japanese washing board"—then runs his hand over the carved area "over and over again." Here Myŏnghak produces markings to identify his home through touch (his hand on the handle) and feel (his feet on the steps), expressing his unwillingness to rely on sight alone. The reminder of the Japanese washboard, though presented like a throwaway detail, appears at too crucial a juncture in the story, and is too specific, for us to discard. It returns us to the streetscape-reportage piece, "Walking Around Seoul," where Hong was haunted by the memory of the sounds of Japanese *geta* in Ch'ungmuro. In this way, Myŏnghak's desire to carve out the surface evokes intimate haptic memories of the colonial past: how a Japanese washboard handle feels in one's hand.

The epistemic and moral panic are closely linked to a sudden relinquishing of status. When Myŏnghak enters the American's home, he has gone from a respectable engineer to a thief. To add insult to injury, he is further reprimanded by the soldier's Korean (presumably romantic) partner—a woman whom he would normally regard as his inferior. What seems like a simple misunderstanding has thrown Myŏnghak's post-colonial, petit-bourgeoisie masculine subjectivity into crisis. Rehabilitation means assuring himself he has clearly identified an area of his own dominion so that the same mistake cannot recur. This act overlaps with the act of differentiating his own house from others—that is to say, a gesture that attempts to move beyond a mechanized society is also the gesture that will save him from future humiliation by a foreign occupier. Marking the house by extra-visual means suggests that the visual field itself has been contaminated.

In "Wandering," an attitude of skepticism towards cinematic visuality was signaled by the story's very title; while enthralled by the pleasures of role-play, the protagonist finds himself in the final scene with a sex worker, having lost his moral compass. In "House No. 213" the agnosticism is directed towards the vision of a planned, mechanized society. The narrative technique, with its precise, photographic detail, confidently moves the protagonist—and the reader—through the city and its outskirts, but the protagonist himself is sapped of vitality, demobilized, and finally banished from what he believes to be his own home.

Science as Symbol: Yi Muyŏng's "Yŏnsabong" (1948) & Kim Kwangju's "Mixed Blood Child" (1958)

At first glance, Yi Muyŏng "Yŏnsabong" and Kim Kwangju's "Mixed Blood Child," written a full decade apart, do not cry out for comparison: the first is a prewar short story about a professor who goes on a hike with a female student and resists temptation despite their mutual attraction, while the second is a novella about a man who finds himself overwhelmed at a dance hall after searching for his wife who has gone missing after a domestic argument. Both, however, feature scientists as central male characters whose professions serve a symbolic function.[58] Both suffer from a limited perspective in life (*saenghwal*) largely owing to their overly scientific orientation.

"Yŏnsabong" rethinks the relationship of self, modern subjectivity and morality within the context of an ongoing debate about the civilizational crisis of modernity. I show how

[58] In Hughes' discussion of Son Changsŏp's "Unresolved Chapter," the protagonist Chisang, who has "a habit of gazing at children in an elementary school playground through the holes ripped in a concrete wall…by gunfire" is described as a "pathologist," who uses the "microscope" to observe the "traces of a specific event." See Hughes, *Freedom's Frontier*, 113. The irony of the medical and scientific trope, for Hughes, is that this form of visuality does not allow for contemplation of the origins of the war. In the case of Yi Muyŏng and Kim Kwangju, what is being symbolically foreclosed by this scientific orientation is an alternate form of *saenghwal*.

visuality, landscape, and desire play a critical role in negotiating this process. T'aesu, the protagonist, is a biology professor in his mid-forties who goes on a hiking trip with his female student Sŏnyŏng, who surreptitiously arranges a trip for just the two of them. This incident pushes T'aesu to deviate from his "mechanical *saenghwal*" which entails going from school to home "like a kindergartener"; his life, moreover, is compared to a "pendulum of a clock" and "a horse with blinders." The story traces their journey as it eventually leads to confession of mutual affection, which is then sublimated into a mutual affirmation of duty, virtue and character.

The two accompanying illustrations collaborate actively with the narrative's central tropes. In the text, "a horse with blinders" functions as a metaphor, but in the illustration featured prominently above the story's first page, the animal exists in the same diegetic space as the protagonist, their juxtaposition functioning as a visual rhyme; just as the horse's blinders conceal and limit his view, T'aesu is "blinded" by his glasses, which symbolize his scientific perspective. His professional commitment is what renders him "blind" and limits him to a "mechanical *saenghwal*"; the glasses, then, signify a form of *epistemic* limitation. While the depth of field of the first illustration is relatively flat, highlighting the "blindness" of the horse and T'aesu showing an automobile moving in the opposite direction, something more perspectivally complex happens in the second illustration, which portrays T'aesu and Sŏnyŏng together as objects of the reader's gaze. While T'aesu is compositionally arranged to be looking up at Sŏnyŏng, their faces are both reflective, looking inward [Figure 17]. Behind them lies the landscape—mountains, trees—providing depth of field. In the text, her face is described as follows:

> …you couldn't really say which of her features were particularly pretty, but you couldn't really pick out where she was ugly either. If you dissected her part by part, you would not call her attractive, but if you saw her from some distance, as you did with a Western painting, her face would come into balance, and it was actually quite adorable. It was on

> the swarthy side so this gave her a coarse look. This darker tone you might have called a flaw, but on the contrary it seemed to make her all the more beautiful. What made her eyes, which were huge like those of a frightened rabbit, so clear, was definitely the dark tone of her skin.

The Western style of painting, though unspecified, is undoubtedly impressionism. What is significant here is how impressionism destabilizes the referent. Here the "dark tone," usually linked to unsophistication and crudeness, is recast as something that actually makes her look more innocent. This reconstitution of Sŏnyŏng's beauty—which is also a re-aestheticization—takes place through the introduction of a Western mode of visuality. It also allows for the "dark tone" of her flesh (a mark of her non-Western status) to be redeemed.

Figure 17. T'aesu and Sŏnyŏng look inward instead of gazing outward at the landscape.
Source: *Paengmin*

Within the logic of the story, "hiking" is more than a departure from T'aesu's everyday life; it is both a demonstration of his masculine prowess which contains potential for sexual consummation as well as a journey into one's inner self. The former is made clear, as Sŏnyŏng coquettishly urges on T'aesu when he grows tired by saying, "When Goethe was seventy, he was romantically involved with a seventeen year old maiden. You, professor, are not even fifty and you can't climb this mountain?" clearly conflating the hike with a sexual journey. When the narrative culminates, she goes from being coquettish to sincere; she has felt that, in order to be true to her feelings for him, she had to create this opportunity. There is a cinematic cut after this outburst, followed by a dangling piece of dialogue: "Look over there. Aren't those remote

mountains like a painting? The gentle lines of the surrounding mountains and that fog!" Gradually, after leaving the identity of the male-female couple in doubt, we learn of what has transpired. He answers, "It sure is beautiful. That fog, that lake—they are beautiful, but the love between Sŏnyŏng and me was also beautiful. Sŏnyŏng struggled valiantly as did I." What was maintained was the "beautiful virtue" between the teacher and his student. Their love for one another is sublimated, and in the process, and the very meaning of the landscape is rewritten. Finally, the eponymous reference is invoked to imbue historical significance to this private, present-day episode; Yŏnsabong, Sŏnyŏng says, is named by the two sons of King T'aejong, who sought solace when T'aejong abdicated the throne to Sejong, and looked down upon the royal house from the peak.

The significance of the story lies in a kind of truth and beauty that can be found only within the non-urban landscape. These sites are also privileged for how they make feelings such as "sorrow" (as in the sorrow of T'aejo's sons) available for rewriting. The discourse of the sublime, while often staging the threat posed by nature upon an individual's encounter to it through its awe-inspiring immensity and borderlessness, usually results in the recuperation of the category of the individual through one's survival of that encounter. "The sublime," in this case, appears in reference to their affection, as in "sublime love" (*sunggohan aejŏng*), as occurring between teacher and student. The moral message of the tale valorizes the sublation of lust as a way of neutralizing a certain kind of aggressive female sexuality. Yet, the gender dynamic is not easily reducible to a kind of teacher-student/male-female paternalism. She is not, for example, chided or in any way punished for having engineered this encounter, and they participate equally, collaboratively, in their sublation of illicit desire, allowing for a different kind of consummation between individuals—a new kind of ethics and a rewriting of old moral codes that do not give in

to modernity's sensorial provocations (linked inexorably to urban *saenghwal*, consumer culture, and mass visuality). This example serves as a point of stark contrast with the painterly gaze of Kim Kwangsik's male protagonist, who continually imagines himself as part of a "foreign drama" when conversing with his object of affection.

Kim Kwangju's "Mixed-blood Child" (1958) is another work in which the protagonist's scientific profession serves as a symbolic marker. Kim's protagonist "B" is described definitively in the novella's first line as "A biology professor" (full stop). If Yi Muyŏng's T'aesu was described as "blind" and "mechanical," B's profession is meant to signal his squeamishness, rigidness and moral conservatism. He disapproves of his wife who frequents dance halls. When she goes missing for a few days after a ferocious argument, he decides to go searching for her in a dance hall. There, he encounters young women who make money by serving as a dance partner. In a long confession—told in a protracted quotation block that spans multiple pages, riddled with multiple ellipses, during a single dance—B learns that the woman is struggling to raise a son who is "mixed-blood" (*honhyŏra*). The father, who was in the U.S. military, has died. B offers to raise the child himself, though the idea is quickly cast aside. Later, it turns out B's wife was staying with a pair of old friends. B is advised by the husband—who happens to be an obstetrician—that he needs to enhance his virility by "consuming raw snake" if they wish to have a child. The story concludes when B's wife promises that she will no longer visit dance halls as long as they can have a child, even if it means they have to resort to adopting a "mixed-blood child." The final image is ambivalent, in which he weighs the idea of becoming "a biologist who eats snakes" or becoming the father of an adopted "mixed-blood child."

While the narrative is accessible and deals with topical issues,[59] it contains images of fantasy and excess, particularly in describing the dance halls, that move it beyond the realm of the naturalist logic of the everyday. What we find is that, though his profession marks him as "rational," the fact his wife has gone missing seems to be driving him nearly mad. His life is "all mixed up" and it's "as though all the organisms on earth had gathered and were teeming inside his head."[60] This trope recurs throughout, until it links up with the ghoulish images when B arrives at the dance hall. As he enters, he imagines, "stepping over a pile of countless bodies swarming with maggots"[61] and dance is described in biological terms, as acts of "reproduction and spreading of the seed, the wild dance of naked organisms," while the hall is described as "the crucible of bodies where all sorts of beasts grab at each other like swarming maggots." [62] The "hundreds of millions of hands" of the dancers are described as "all sorts of organisms to fill up the vision of his near-sighted glasses." Once B hears the dancer's story about the "mixed-blood child," the repeating trope of "swarming maggots" takes on an explicitly racialized imagery: "in [B's] head, countless organisms on earth swarmed inside his head, along with 'blacks' and 'whites,' little bastards with yellow-brown hair and blue eyes, all the mixed-blood children on earth seemed to jumble up inside him and assail his eyes."[63]

For B, what is so unnerving about these image is that these "organisms" (maggots, dancers, dancers' hands, mixed-blood children) appear in unfathomable quantities to overwhelm his visual field. What B experiences is a threat to his self-possession, a near collapse of his

[59] There is a direct reference to Chŏng Pisŏk's notorious contemporary novel, *Madame Freedom* in B's musings about his wife's lifestyle.
[60] Kim Kwangju, *Honhyŏra* [mixed-blood child], (*Sŏul-si:* Ch'ŏnggusŏrim, 1958), 111.
[61] Ibid., 134.
[62] Ibid., 137.
[63] Ibid., 158.

rational faculty. This feeling of disorientation shares an important affinity with Chang Yonghak's articulation of vertigo (*hyŏngijŭng*), and its relationship to the mathematical.

> For the [new generation], reality can be understood as no more than another myth with the determiner "rational" attached to it. This isn't limited to the phenomenon of how "interest" can eventually exceed the "principal sum" is perceived as something ordinary and natural. When you're talking about 10%, the 10% of 100 hwan is 10 hwan, but the 10% of 10,000 hwan is a 1,000 hwan. Nothing is more obvious. Yet we feel a sense of vertigo when confronted with such a chasm.[64]

Chang goes on to question why the convention of the decimal system feels "natural" and suggests that perhaps "vertigo is that which cannot be avoided in a world where '1+1=2.' The main purpose of his introduction of math, and its clear economic connotations foregrounded by his use of monetary unit ("hwan") following a period of crippling high-inflation, is to underscore how even the supposedly rational within the logic of modern living can be absurd within everyday existence. For Chang, this interior disorientation is described by relying on a mathematical trope; for Kim, it is equally *mathematical, biological* and *aesthetic*. Throughout Kim's novella (as the above quotes may have already shown), the scientific and the aesthetic interpenetrate as they impinge on the protagonist's visual field. The following excerpt serves as a particularly rich example:

> For Dr. B in his thick near-sighted glasses, this wild dance of bustling bodies appeared mottled like a foggy scene across a river, or, on the other hand, seemed to suddenly enlarge and rush towards him like he was looking through a magnifying lens, and there was also the deeply felt nostalgia of sitting around somewhere in Tokyo during his college years.[65]

Within a single sentence, Kim adjusts the reader's spatio-temporal orientation by first extending the distance between the eye and the object of sight ("across a river"), then suddenly contracting that distance by magnifying the object, then finally jumping to the colonial past. The visual tropes are both painterly ("mottled like a foggy scene") and scientific ("magnifying lens").

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[64] Chang Yonghak, "Sentimental Remarks" *Munhak Yesul,* September 1956, 175.
[65] Kim Kwangju, *Honhyŏra*, 135.

This spatio-temporal disorientation is not accidental. We know from the beginning that B's scientific subjectivity both empowers and limits his temperament and worldview. He is chided by his friends: "So what if you're a biology professor? You can't research your own mode of life (*saengt'ae*) or physiology (*saengni*)." These voices are recalled in a single quote, interrupted by ellipses, giving a sense of a fragmented series of fleeting voices. As for his wife, she tells him, "You might be able to analyze organisms but you cannot analyze the subtlety of dance!" When his wife gushes on about the thrill (*kibun*) of dancing, he sees it merely as "camouflage for sex." Yet B's desire to understand the lure of dance is sincere,[66] and his investigation at the dancehall is not motivated simply by a sense of begrudging husbandly obligation; rather, the curiosity that mobilizes him shifts with surprising flexibility between that of an abandoned lover, an ethnographer, a tourist, and a misguided philanthropist. His inability to track down his wife not withstanding, B is eventually even able to enjoy (in spite of himself) meeting a handful of professional dancers (who charge 2,000 hwan per dance, he notes), and finds some measure of gratification for having procured (in fact, *consumed*) this experience.

There is a crucial overlap in the mobilization of the protagonist's desire in Kim's "Mixed-blood Child" and the mobilization of readerly desires identifiable in street photography and exposés of so-called "foreign zones" and articles from "Street as Information Center" discussed in Chapter 1. One particularly prurient "tip" published in *Shinch'ŏnji* a year before the Korean War, includes a lengthy description of how a few female college students who went looking for dance lessons were maneuvered into so-to-speak, "dancing lying down."[67] The breathless description conveys in precise detail how a rubber ball is placed in the pants pocket of

[66] During his argument with his wife, B wonders if there is a difference in feeling between sex and dance. "Is it the same as the feeling of sex? If not, is it similar? If not, is it something else that is completely different? If it's completely different, why then does the partner have to be the opposite sex?" B then goes on to declare his desire to analyze this feeling. See Kim Kwangju, *Honhyŏra*, 127,

[67] Pak, Susan, "The Street Information Center," *Shinch'ŏnji*, August 1949.

the male dancer so that upon contact with his dance student, her "unmentionable region" and the man's simultaneous brushing up against her breasts rendered the woman powerless to her own sexual excitement. The stylistic excess, in this context, serves multiple functions: to excite the readers' lusts and to transport them to these moments of intimate contact through the medium of salacious rumor. While I would hesitate to call the article itself "literary" per se, its language is self-consciously modulated to transport, excite and impart knowledge (or provide the illusion of imparting knowledge) all at once. In the case of Kim's novella, it is the technique of long ellipses or the grotesque excess of the "swarming maggots" that mark the zones of scandal and otherness. The dancer's protracted confession told in a single-quotation is a high-wire act of literary showmanship, something akin to the modernist sentence that refuses to end or follow the standard decorum for punctuation marks (or a single take in cinema that refuses to cut): it leaves the reader breathless or flipping ahead, perhaps, to see where it will end.

For B, the lasting mark of the dance hall is the titular "mixed-blood child" who never actually materializes in the novella's diegetic space, yet is able to haunt the story from the margins and assail the protagonist's consciousness with phantasmagoric impressions. The ghastly images of maggots and teeming microbiological infestation that run throughout the story assume human embodiment in the figure of the "mixed-blood child." Yet, in the end, this image which seems to be so terribly unsettling for B throughout the story becomes a critical element in his reconciliation with his wife. Though the story begins with a rupture of domestic *saenghwal* due to the corrupting influences of dance hall culture, it is, rather unexpectedly, the very possibility of adopting a "mixed-blood child" that restores the promise of a stable home life. There is also the possibility that his wife will be able to conceive naturally, as long as B will take his virility treatment and become "the biologist who eats snakes." The story's concluding line

remains ambivalent as B mentally pictures "himself, countless snakes, and the countless faces of mixed-blood children" as he makes his way home silently.[68] It is crucial that the author has B project his own self-image in this final gallery of images, because it shows that he is actively contemplating his own identity vis-à-vis these image-assemblages. The mirroring logic of juxtaposition meshes the terror of dehumanization (biologist becomes beast) with the racial terror of miscegenation. Yet within the story's peculiar moral logic, it is better to face these terrors than to face the problem of surrendering one's *saenghwal*.

The Abject Body as Sign: Nam Chŏnghyŏn's "Warning Area" (1958) & Ha Kŭnch'an's "White Paper Beard" (1959)

Nam Chŏnghyŏn's debut story "Warning Area" (1958) describes a familiar scene of postwar masculinity in crisis. Unlike the petit-bourgeoisie class of engineer, scientist and professor we see in the fictions discussed by Kim Kwangsik, Kim Kwangju and Yi Muyŏng, Nam's protagonist Chongsu is an unemployed former soldier who lives with his wife Sugi, sister Suni and an old housemaid. Chongsu's wife runs around with other men while his sister is bedridden from some unknown disease, pining for an American soldier named James who has left her. Chongsu goes out, is disoriented by the urban bustle around him. He thinks he sees James (but is not sure), he is swindled by an old schoolmate, thinks he sees his wife with the same old schoolmate (but is not sure). The story concludes with Chongsu trying to chase down the two who have gotten into a car and is driving away.[69]

[68] Kim Kwangju, *Honhyŏra*, 172.
[69] The story is reminiscent of many of Son Ch'angsŏp's fiction from the period in that its characters are mentally or physically ailing and wallowing in languor and immobility. Yet it resembles the previously discussed stories in this chapter in that its narrative energy resides in the trope of the journey—in this case, a series of hapless misadventures on the street.

In modernist flâneur texts, it is not uncommon to represent the female body as a site of groundedness, nourishment and refuge. That is to say, even while the narrative language indulges in a play of signifying possibilities embodied in the flâneur's meandering journey, a promise of rescue from urban estrangement is held in reserve in the figure of the female body, which is linked to referential reality and domestic space.[70] To put it somewhat schematically, female body=referent=reality=home vs. male consciousness=language=signs=streetscapes. In "Warning Area," there are three types of female bodies: 1) Suni's body, which is clearly unwell but a strange source of vitality. This is underscored in the lively description of her epileptic fits and exultantly rendered scenes of her excretion. 2) Sugi's body which Chongsu, for some reason, has a hard time recognizing. This indeterminacy is linked to her relationship with sex work and the commodity form. 3) the old housemaid who is a living reminder of the Korean War: displacement, economic hardship, familial separation and loss. While all three hold in reserve the possibility of rescuing Chongsu from estrangement, a persistent form of indeterminacy operates across all three types. More than an affliction, it defines Chongsu's very condition.

The story is rife with anxiety caused by indeterminacy—a hallmark theme of modernist fiction—and the attendant problem of the crisis of representation discussed in the beginning of the chapter.[71] In addition to Suni's mysterious ailment, which cannot be diagnosed, there is the more basic problem of visual recognition. The description of Suni's illness—symptoms shown

[70] In the conclusion of Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), Leopold Bloom's epic journey of alienation from his wife concludes with her triumphant "yes," in the chapter "Penelope" meant to stand for Odysseus's final return. In Pak T'aewŏn's novella "The Day in the Life of Kubo" (1934), which engages in explicit intertextuality with *Ulysses*, the flâneur-writer protagonist returns home to his mother after a day of wandering the streets, vowing to have a genuine *saenghwal* (i.e. to get married, to dine at home). Within the Japanese context, the New Sensationist Yokomitsu Riichi's "The Underside of Town" (1925) features an image of a disembodied breast (seen through a crack in a wall), which, while underscoring the theme of a fractured mode of visuality characteristic of urban, technological modernity, also holds in reserve the meaning of the breast as a maternal symbol of nourishment and organic union. In Riichi's version, the breast gives up bodily materiality and is reduced to a mere projection—a shadow. My point is not that modernist texts necessarily gravitate towards one direction or the other, but that the tension plays a crucial role in animating the aesthetic of convergence and divergence, separation and union.

[71] Indeed, Nam's portrayal of the namby-pamby protagonist who is at the mercy of his wife who resorts to sex work to feed her family is reminiscent of Yi Sang's classic modernist story "Wings" (1936).

through fits and throes—is both ghastly and erotic, a slippage made all the more uncomfortable by the similarity in name between his sister and his wife, Sugi. Seeing the old housemaid who is a Korean War refugee, Chongsu is struck by her uncanny resemblance to his own mother who was left behind in the North. ("Almost instinctively, Chongsu drew his cheek close to the old woman as if he was rubbing his face against his mother's.") When he is outside, the problem of recognition persists. He may or may not have seen James (having a physical snapshot of the man seems to be of little help). Chongsu repeatedly *thinks* he sees Sugi but cannot be sure. Ironically, what allows him to tell her apart is how she "performs" her swaying gait on the street.[72] As shown in the above discussion of Kim Kwangsik's "Wandering," tropes of cinematic performance haunt the protagonist's affective episteme. The indeterminacy of individual identity is only made more acute by the visible proliferation of the commodity form. Later in the story, Chongsu sees a girl wearing an outfit similar to what Sugi owns, fondling a pink earring, which also resembles Sugi's. Even the golden necklace, the broach, and handbag are similar. Chongsu's inability to properly recognize Sugi in public means the narrative cannot stage a reassuring reconciliation between the husband and wife.

Another explanation for Chongsu's inability to recognize his wife is the vertiginous disorientation of urban life. Just as Nam portrays Suni's sickness as a twisted form of vitality, he ironically inverts the bustling activity in the streets—of industry and commerce—by figuring it as an unfolding catastrophe. We see this at the very moment when Chongsu fears that both Suni and the old housemaid have stopped breathing, and the narrative eye moves from the interior to the exterior.

[72] Chongsu wonders to himself once he realizes the woman is not his wife: "Shake it a little more! Focus your sensory organs on the lower-half of your body, like Sugi does. Rather pointlessly, Chongsu found himself getting worked up like a director in a film shoot."

> [Suni] seemed like she would never move again. That wasn't all. The tattered clothes hanging on the wall and the half-eaten bowl of rice. The air in the room had come to a suffocating stand-still. *Motionless interior.* It's over. Chongsu felt a fire in his breast. Won't someone set something on fire? A fire like a luminous storm, a scream soaring from chaos, the speed of a red vehicle speeding with its sirens on. These thoughts were enough to rouse him to a climax of gratification… He thought he could hear the sizzle of something burning. Chongsu went for a look through the door. *But this was not the sound of something catching fire, but the cumbersome motion of buildings, signs, masses and machines. It made him feel left out to think that time and history were not at a stand-still. They were still very much in operation, just without him.* (emphasis added)[73]

As Chongsu tries to conjure visions to lift this moment out of deathlike stillness, what Nam provides (with characteristic black humor), are images of destruction and mayhem as figures of vitality. "The sizzle of something burning" is equated with the sound of urban capitalist spectacle—of administration, exchange, and consumption. The scene captures the terror of time and history as they unfold—Nam's repeated reference to fiery catastrophe ("a fire like a luminous storm") calling to mind Walter Benjamin's well-known imagery of angel of history,[74] and the terror of being left out of this progression, even while understanding the mindlessness such a participation would call for. What is crucial about this transition is that the after-image of wartime destruction is seamlessly woven into the "peaceful" present of the urban everyday.

> While he'd been distracted, the atmosphere from before when the big-nosed soldier was passing by had moved on like switch of scene in a film. It wasn't just the Yankee who'd moved. Anything with volume was in motion. The electric pole, the sign boards, the trolley, cars and a staggering number of people were fighting their way forward diligently as if something was chasing them. The speed was frightening. He felt a prick of compunction. He was the only bastard standing in place. He felt as if he was thoughtlessly blocking the path where all of life was rush through.[75]

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[73] Originally published in Nam Chŏnghyŏn, "Kyŏnggo kuyŏk" [warning area], *Munhak yesul*, 1958**.** Quoted from Nam Chŏnghyŏn and Chŏn Sŭngse, *Punji Hwanggu-ŭi pimyŏng oe*: *Hanguksosŏlmunhakdaegye 43,* (Sŏul-si: Tonga Ch'ulp'ansa, 1996), 16-17.

[74] Benjamin writes in "Ninth Thesis on the Philosophy of History, "…a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in [the angel's] wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress." See Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, (New York: Schocken, 1969), 257-258.

[75] Nam Chŏnghyŏn, *Punji*, 25.

Nam's attention to Chongsu's loss of agency as he gets swept up in the crowd like a "leaf caught in the wind," as well as his observation that "Regrettably, it seemed [the crowd] had neither purpose nor direction" underscores the author's ambivalent attitude towards the path of history.

Within Nam's double-bind, there is no possibility of solace except for a brief moment when Chongsu writes "Warning Zone" on a piece of toilet paper in red lipstick and places it gently on his wife's chest. Yet, unlike the modernist flâneur texts I have discussed above, there is no female body=referent=reality=home where he can find refuge. Ironically, the act of labeling does not restore him to an organic unity wherein he no longer has to feel estranged. On the contrary, the label, rather than helping claim that which has been labeled, exists to serve as a reminder that he should never dare to claim it. Nam's conscious distilling of South Korea's postwar spatial reality—of U.S. military bases and zones of extraterritoriality—into the private realm of husband-wife relations reveals for us the allegoric legibility of the female body as national territory estranged from the people. The deliberate confusion of sexual and scatological symbology (lipstick on toilet paper) on the other hand, subverts the self-authorizing official tenor of such signage (i.e. "Warning Zone"). Nam's critical strategy is to portray the young women in Chongsu's lives as figures of irresolvable contradiction as a way of commenting on South Korea's compromised sovereignty vis-à-vis the U.S. and the hygienic governmentality of the New Life Movement under Syngman Rhee's administration.[76] His wife (Sugi) is a mobile territory of uneven access even to her husband. His sister (Suni) is Westernized in her love of nudity (via magazine photos shown to her by James) but still gloriously "backwards" in her excretory habits.

[76] Nam Chŏnghyŏn would continue to engage with themes of sexuality, scatology, biopolitics and geopolitics in later works, "Who Are You Anyway?" (1961) and "Land of Excrement" (1965).

If "Warning Area" represents the female body rendered unrecognizable and estranged through sex work and commodity relations, then Ha Kŭnch'an's "White Paper Beard" (1959) portrays a male body rendered unrecognizable by the overlapping conditions of war, consumerism and Western popular culture [Figure 18]. Tonggil is a schoolboy who is shocked to find his father return from the Korean War without his right arm. The father who worked as a carpenter before his disfigurement finds a job as a film promoter outside a movie theater. The climax of the story comes when Tonggil comes face to face with his father who is advertising a foreign film.

> Tonggil's eyes opened like saucers. He'd seen something truly strange. It was considerably far away, but even at a glance, he could see that it was some kind of an advertising sign. It was about the size of a straw bag. *The advertising sign was walking in the middle of the road and headed in this direction. The rowdy children had clamored around the moving signboard.*
>
> Before he knew it, Tonggil was running towards it. *Now that he was closer, it was definitely an advertising sign. But attached to this sign were two legs, even a head. It was a person. It was a person who was walking towards him with a large signboard hanging over his neck.* He appeared to be carrying the same signboard over his back. He was wearing a multi-colored conical hat (*kokkal*) and his face was slathered with some flour-like powder. White beard dangled from his chin. From certain angles he appeared to be a very old man. From others, he didn't look like one at all. (emphasis added)[77]

The "strange" appearance of Tonggil's father is exaggerated by the childlike perspective provided by the narrator, which first sees the form as a thing that is somehow animate ("the advertising sign was walking…") and has person-like qualities ("attached…were two legs, even a head"). Even when the moving signboard is recognized as a "person," the uncanniness never quite fades. The mélange of details is intended to produce an effect that goes beyond the comic. The uncanny human form has been both diminished and augmented. The father's arm, formerly the source of his creative and productive power as a carpenter, has given way via dismemberment to the prosthetic of the commoditized image—an advertisement of a cinematic

[77] Ha Kŭnch'an, "Hŭin chongi suyŏm" [white paper beard], *Sasanggye*, no. 75, October 1959, 368.

spectacle. Rather than producing objects of practical (use) value, his purpose is reduced to a medium that collects and then directs attention (of the children) to a separate site of spectacle.

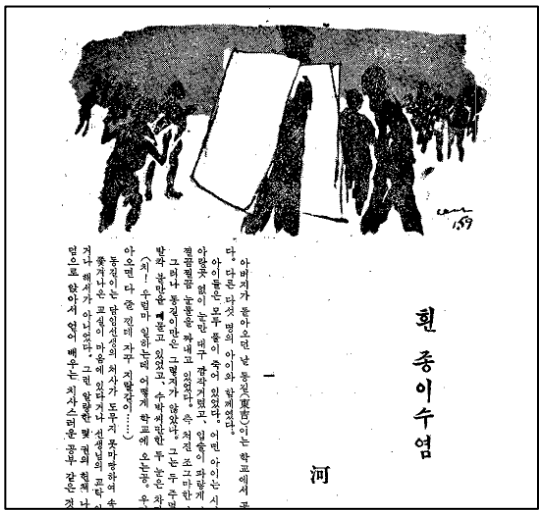

Figure 18. From opening page of "White Paper Beard."
Source: *Sasanggye*

The child's perspective is not simply an authorial instrument of critique via defamiliarization.[78] The childish perspective also seems to stand for a certain universal quality—the inability to weigh situations thoughtfully and appeal to morality and reason, as well as a tendency to give in to instinct and desire. Hence, Tonggil's initial shock of seeing that his father has lost an arm quickly gives way to focusing on downing his supper. In the same vein, Tonggil is drawn towards the signboard automatically, almost mechanically ("before he knew it"). The same phenomenon can be seen in Nam's "Warning Area," in which Chongsu, upon seeing a job advertisement on an electric pole, feels his body "getting dragged before he knew it, like iron getting sucked towards a magnet."

In both "Warning Zone" and "White Paper Beard," the climactic points of the story occur when a human body is literally linked to a sign. Jin-kyung Lee's analysis of "necropolitical labor"

[78] Song Pyŏngsu's "Shorty Kim" is another canonical short story from the period that employs a child's perspective on sexuality, pedophilia, and interracial intimacy to level a critique against U.S. military camp town culture. See Song Pyŏngsu, "Ssyori k'im" [shorty Kim], *Munhak yesul,* July 1957.

allows us to understand the two cases (of sex worker and maimed soldier) together. Lee conceptualizes necropolitical labor as a "certain 'fostering' of life, already premised on their death or the disposability of their lives," which is "limited to serving the labor demands of the state or empire."[79] In this sense, soldiers and sex workers are both categorized as necropolitical labor, in that the very nature of sex work is predicated on the disposability of the prostitute's living body and "the symbolic murder of the prostitute's subjectivity."[80] While Sugi volunteers herself into sex work, Nam's story implies that her family's survival depends on it. Linking of her body to the national territory renders the symbolic violence of her necropolitical labor secondary, prioritizing, instead, Chongsu's wounded masculine subjectivity, which seeks to claim her body as referent=reality=home. Chongsu's visual-olfactory apparatus is primed to buck the assimilatory logic of hygienic governmentality: even in sickness and abjection, a female body, whether mid-excretion or suffering epileptic fits, can be described as a source of vitality and exultant excess. Meanwhile, the body of Tonggil's father goes from being carpenter to soldier to a human advertisement. We may also read this as subversive commentary on the positive and uplifting representation of amputee rehabilitation (for children and adults) that was being circulated by both the United States and the South Korean government: through news reels, newspapers and magazines.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued against the reductive position that postwar novels avoided "concrete investigation of reality" and indulged in trafficking unverifiable "abstraction." Underlying what has been characterized pejoratively as political escapism and philosophical

[79] Jin-kyung Lee, *Service Economies: Militarism, Sex Work and Migrant Labor in South Korea*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 5-6.
[80] Ibid., 7.

excess were sustained attempts within literary criticism to offer alternative ways of imagining, articulating, and visualizing *saenghwal*. These attempts (as we have seen articulated by Chang Yonghak and Kim Tongni) imagined literature as a mode of overcoming the ontological and ideological limitations of modern existence and literature's over-reliance on the representational regime of naturalism. Situated intermedially and historically, Chang and Kim's critical polemic can be understood to be a symptom of the diminishing authority of literature's capacity to map the material reality of society. The emergence of competing media forms in the postwar context did not mean that this "authority" would simply be displaced on to another medium. On the contrary, I have shown in Chapter 1 how Han Yŏngsu's street photography successfully mapped the encroachment of commodity forms and mass-cultural images into the social fabric of everyday existence, so that the very capacity to differentiate between reality and its representation began to dissolve away. In this sense, literary works discussed in this chapter worked in concert with the epistemic-ontological ethos of Han Yŏngsu's photography, tracking the postwar crisis of representation in which human life found itself besieged by the disorienting visuality of proliferating commodities, circulation of mass-cultural images, and abject war-damaged bodies.

The next chapter shifts our focus to the countryside, but the thematic of mapping the spatio-temporality of postwar everyday life remains central to my focus. In "Crimson Hill" (1964), a later work by Ha Kŭnch'an, for example, the target of this "mapping" is the rural space, and the story takes place a full decade after the Korean War. Many visual evidence of the war seems to have disappeared. The students at the elementary school where the story's primary action unfolds do not even know about it. The school is an "experimental school," designated by

the Ministry of Education.[81] On the question of how to construct a desirable rural school, the teacher Mr Yu. declares,

> First we must construct a map of this area. A map isn't just something flat drawn on a piece of paper. It's better to make a three-dimensional model. Then all the public facilities, roads, villages, mountains, fields and streams will be clearly arranged within it. Of course, the crimson hill, with its blooming azaleas, will have a place there as well.[82]

The crimson hill, as stated early in the story, contains the remains of "countless number of people" who were killed during the Korean War. Not only is it a fading reminder of past violence and a site of trauma and repressed memories, the hill inflicts new violence, both physical and psychic, when a boy who unwittingly unearths a bomb is killed in the process, and a girl who witnesses his ghastly death is emotionally and psychologically maimed. When the girl goes into a violent fit before a head of the educational mission by the name of "Dr. Brown" (who examines the three-dimensional model of the town with great interest),[83] he declares, "she is a problem child. There must be a reason for her convulsion. It is the duty of the instructor to make corrections." In the concluding scene, Mr. Yu sees that Dr. Brown, "with his brown-eyed gaze, was gently stroking Mr. Yu inside the sparkling silver frames of his glasses."[84]

While the three-dimensional "map of this area" has been collaboratively constructed by Mr. Yu and his students, deploying scientific techniques to analyze the various "specimen" in the town, the overall pedagogical ethos and framework of this enterprise can be traced back to U.S.-sponsored rural development programs in the 1950s. The model of the town that Mr. Brown and other Western observers find so interesting is, in fact, a material embodiment of rational objectification of territory, its mode of representation subsuming public infrastructure ("facilities, roads") and natural landscapes ("blooming azaleas"). Yet what this totalizing logic of

[81] Ha Kŭnch'an, "Pulgŭn ŏndŏk" [crimson hills], *Sasanggye*, December 1964, 344.
[82] Ibid., 348.
[83] Ibid., 356.
[84] Ibid., 358.

representation does not have "a place for" is the devastating consequences of the Korean War, one of the historical conditions for the emergence of the epistemological regime that made such models possible in the first place. The truth of that violent history cannot be found in the model, but remains literally buried in the hills. Meanwhile, those who suffer from the war's psychic wounds find themselves rendered as psychological specimen—Mr. Yu included—"gently stroked" as objects of manipulation, management, and knowledge-production by Dr. Brown's neo-colonial gaze. To better understand the postwar countryside as a staging ground for this developmentalist epistemological regime, we now turn our attention to how rural *saenghwal* was being visualized, represented, and circulated across different forms of media in the 1950s.

CHAPTER 3

Contesting Audio-Visual Enlightenment: Re-imagining the Rural Everyday

> "Perhaps they will need Western eyes a little longer. Surely every Western film maker who goes into Asia, if he operates (as he should) with delicacy, can leave behind his small legacy of heightened observation—or of techniques for inducing that observation—among Asian film makers who have worked with him."
>
> —Miriam Bucher, "Notes on Film Making in Southeast Asia" from *Asia Society Letter* (1959)[1]

> "During the roundtables where the adults were present, we would make an audio recording of their statements without their knowledge and play it back for them afterwards. The effect was huge. It was particularly useful in persuading the school parents who'd shown hostility towards our projects.
>
> —Principal Kim, "Record of Community Enlightenment," *Saegyoyuk* (1959)[2]

> "Could we not say that original Western thought emphasized seeing while indigenous Eastern thought emphasized hearing? ...the eye's strength appears to lie in extending outward while the ear excels in pulling things inward. Then what is more precious: the eye or the ear? Which is greater: seeing or hearing?"
>
> —Pak Chonghong, "Seeing and Hearing," *Saebyŏk* (1959)[3]

Early in Han Hŭkgu's serialized novel *Looking Down at the Village*, the protagonist Chŏlju, a schoolteacher in his forties who gives up his city life to manage an orchard in the countryside, looks out over the cityscape with critical thoughts about all the Seoulites who go about their lives consuming food, clothes, and building materials produced in the countryside. "Seoul is the reason ten million people don't have enough to eat," Han writes, "even though they plow the fields till their nails have worn down, and their backs are curved like hunchbacks." Chŏlju's gaze is informed by the critical consciousness seen in the photo-journalistic piece

[1] Miriam Bucher, "Notes on Film Making in Southeast Asia," Excerpts from Asia Society Letter ,Volume 2, Number 3, May 1959, Theodore Conant Collection, Notes I 1-80 Folder 7.
[2] "Chiyŏk sahoe kyemongŭi kirok" [record of community enlightenment], *Saegyoyuk,* July 1959, 36.
[3] Pak Chonghong, "Pondanŭn kotkwa tŭnnenda kŏt" (sic) [seeing and hearing], *Saebyŏk*, October 1959, 86.

"Seoul's Ostentatious Display" discussed in Chapter 1 (which shows how splendid urban displays distract people from various social and economic afflictions of the countryside), but the scope of the novel goes beyond cynicism of critique by providing concrete means of resolving the structural inequality between the city and the countryside.

For Han, U.S.-sponsored visual media and local agency towards rural development and uplift are intimately linked. In his novel, he pays particular attention to magazines describing U.S. agricultural production. For example, when Chŏlju shows a friend magazine pictorials of American farms with automated systems for feeding poultry, the friend wonders if the stress of being trapped in confined chicken-cages would be harmful to the health of the stock. Chŏlju replies that scientists have already developed pills for chickens to address this problem. In Han's novel, the idealized visual representation of American farms *function as they are meant to*—that is, according to the hopes of the propagandist who wishes to instill self-motivation without the specter of coercion. Chŏlju eventually achieves his goal of setting up a successful orchard, and his son applies to study agricultural science at University of Oregon. The novel's final scene—the first radical shift in point-of-view, which, until then, has been curated in limited third-person from Chŏlju—presents Chŏlju's son looking over the small town from his plane ride on his flight to the United States; what Chŏlju saw only as pictures, his son shall see in real life.

In this chapter, I explore ways in which the visuality of everyday rural life in the postwar years was imbricated with a global, U.S.-sponsored discourse about the deployment of audio-visual media for educational purposes in the so-called "developing world." The magazine pictorials of automated American farms in Han's novel was part-and-parcel of this visualization campaign. UNESCO's "Fundamental Education" program was a prime example of this broader effort to bring about global enlightenment, by training rural educators who would become local

ethnographers of their communities and help uplift local residents towards rational, hygienic, productive, self-reflective mode of modern living. While ideological origins of the program (as well as key members of its staff) had colonial roots, the utopic formulation of global educational campaigns in the postwar era emphasized universalism, egalitarianism, and nation-building. There was widespread enthusiasm surrounding the broader availability of audio-visual media, which encompassed everything from low-tech poster boards to mobile film units. The architects of Fundamental Education and what I refer to as "audio-visual enlightenment" believed that judicious deployment of media technology could contribute significantly to the innervation of human subjectivity towards global modernization and progress.

Something like the phenomenon of "intermedial reflexivity" can be observed in these media formations. I introduced this term in Chapter 1 within the context of post-liberation and postwar urban mapping, when South Korean reportage, illustrations, and photography collaborated to piece together fractured experiences into a shared social imaginary. While the resulting chorus was necessarily multivocal in tone and tenor owing to its haphazard open-endedness, the "intermedial reflexivity" we find in the project of audio-visual enlightenment, by contrast, was teleological in orientation: its functions were primarily interpellation and absorption. This meant, the ideological purpose of these media formations was to produce self-reflecting individuals who were re-sensitized to respond to their environments as modern subjects. And built into the very logic of what I call "postwar enlightenment visuality" was the contradiction of emancipation and coercion. On the one hand, the tools of audio-visual enlightenment would produce self-motivated modern subject; on the other hand, the structure of enlightenment was inherently hierarchical, relying on overseers to ensure that the educational program was unfolding according to design. The frequency of meta-cinematic techniques (when

cinema references its practices of production and/or consumption within its own content) in enlightenment media, I will show, were symptomatic of the structural anxiety that resulted from this contradiction.

Existing scholarship of rural development in South Korea during this period have tended to focus on U.S.-centered narrative of uplift or socio-economic analysis of transformations in the countryside. Works in literary and cultural studies have emphasized the postwar re-articulation of the rural imaginary as a burgeoning site of uncontaminated national affect. By contrast, I focus on political, philosophical, aesthetic, and media-specific articulations and expressions within local print culture that rendered their own vision of the role the South Korean countryside ought to play in the process of modernization. For example, Han's aforementioned novel appeared in the monthly journal *Farmer's Life* (*nongmin saenghwal*), which published articles about conditions in the countryside, improving farming and animal husbandry techniques, and various aspects of rural life, expressed through short stories, poems, comics, not to mention essays on folk arts and recreation. *Farmer's Life* targeted illiteracy, unhygienic practices, superstition, excessive drinking, living beyond one's economic means, as forms of everyday life in need of reflection and reform, but while it criticized "backward" practices in rural areas, it also leveled a sustained critique of urban life, which it characterized as vain, decadent, lacking in character [Figure 19]. In other words, such voices envisioned the countryside as playing a central role in leading the rest of the nation in its march towards modernization.

The chapter starts by foregrounding the global universalist discourse then transitions to the local site of its deployment and implementation. Along the way, I pay attention to both the "what" and the "how"—the message that enlightenment programs sought to convey and the media-techniques they employed to pursue those ends. I begin by tracing the organizational and

ideological origins of UNESCO's Fundamental Education, with a particular emphasis on the postwar global discourse of audio-visual education and its role within the program.

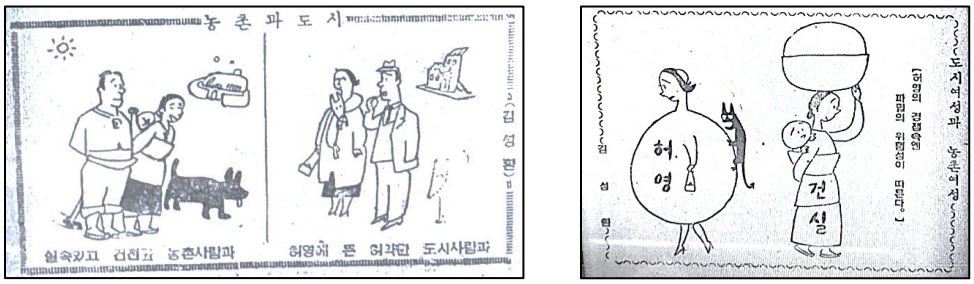

Figure 19. Critiquing the City. "Countryside and the City" (left) describes city dwellers as "weakened" from being "hopped up on vanity," and the country folks as wholesome people "with substance." In the same vein, "City Women and Country Women" (right) portrays urban women as bloated with vanity.
Source: *Nongmin Saenghwal*

The second section moves to a discussion of the Korean Fundamental Education Centre (KORFEC) in Suwon. The third section looks at a revealing final report compiled by Rural Leader Training Center director Choi Sung Jun, who inserted a sampling from his journal, entitled, "Pages from My Diary" in *The Brief History of The Rural Leaders Training Centre* to describe his experiences studying adult education and community development programs abroad. The fourth section continues with the trope of "the diary," considering how it was deployed to imagine self-reflective reform of everyday life in magazine pictorials and educational films of the era. The fifth section analyzes the form of meta-cinematic visuality in educational films of this era. The sixth section examines the culture of open-air cinema of this era as a form of *media divergence* in which previously consolidated assemblage of media are re-configured to address new social needs; I understand this form of spectatorship as countering the hegemonic regime of audio-visual enlightenment. Finally, I examine the South Korean intellectual discourse, bringing to light complex philosophical, aesthetic, and historical negotiations with respect to the contested significance of the countryside that went beyond the call of enlightenment as envisioned by global aid organizations.

Fundamental Education and Audio-Visual Education

Since its adoption by UNESCO at its first session of its General Conference in 1946, "Fundamental Education" (FE) gained currency throughout the world, along with translated terms (e.g. "l'Education de Base," "Educación Fundamental") and other English equivalents ("Mass Education," "Social Education," "Community Education).[4] While simplified by many at first as "a campaign against illiteracy," it was actually envisioned by its international team to fundamentally reshape how people around the developing world—particularly in rural areas—oriented themselves towards their everyday lives. As British diplomat and head of FE John Bowers put it, the program was meant "to help men and women to live fuller and happier lives in adjustment with their changing environment, to develop the best elements of their own culture, and to achieve the economic and social progress which will enable them to take their practice in the modern world."[5] In other words, the design of the FE went beyond teaching a system of knowledge or set of technical skills. It was about producing modern subjects mobilized towards efficiency, productivity, and nation building. Drawing from sources in UNESCO and FE archives—particularly texts from *Fundamental Education: Common Ground for All People*—I will emphasize the core ideals of FE and tease out some of its key philosophical inconsistencies (which were not necessarily elided or suppressed from discussion). I will also underscore the integral role that the promise of audio-visual media and mass communication played in the conceptualization of FE.

One way to clarify the ethos behind FE would be to examine the naming of the program. "Fundamental Education" was chosen over "popular," "mass," or "basic" education, because the

[4] "Administrative Committee on Co-ordination Working Group on Community Development: Working Paper on The Definition of Fundamental Education," June 15, 1956 1-7, UNESCO archives, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001797/179727eb.pdf.
[5] John Bowers, "What is Fundamental Education?" July 25, 1947, 1-3, UNESCO Archives, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001258/125863eb.pdf

latter group of terms "evoked unpleasing connotations" of methods that ignored individual differences. This marked the postwar character of FE, as an individualistic, democratically-oriented attempt to veer away from the methods of ideological campaigns waged by Germany, Italy, and Japan, which had used education and youth organizations towards "war and conquest."[6] This did not mean, however, that individualistically-inclined education was to be considered an end in itself. On the contrary, it was a means—or the basic minimum—required to enable a life that was "healthy and fit"[7] and orient individuals towards socialization and productive citizenship. As Julian Huxley feared, literacy alone might simply create "new ways of filling time" and "new forms of escape from reality—in the shape of cheap newspapers and magazines and…films—instead of sending them to stored treasures of art and wisdom or promoting a fuller enjoyment of reality and a deeper understanding of nature and human life."[8] (Nazi Germany was used as an example of a population of highly literate people who had led a nation into "undemocratic developments."[9]) For Ogden, spreading literacy, while intended to protect against "forms of verbal illusions," may mean that people would be "more liable to be exploited through print." What must be taught, then, was a means to "detect the ways to which [people's] emotions can twist their thinking, how words sometimes refer only to imaginary fictions while those who use them think they stand for things."[10] Both Huxley and Ogden express concern about the danger of education leading the enlightened away from "reality," towards "new forms of escape" or "imaginary fictions." Their wish was to keep the enlightened masses tethered to a social reality that tends towards productive citizenship and progress.

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[6] Special Committee to the Preparatory Commission of UNESCO, *Fundamental Education: Common Ground for All People* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), 12.
[7] Ibid., 177.
[8] Ibid., 14-15.
[9] Ibid., 15. Isacc Kandel from Columbia University's Teacher's College also pointed out that "the nation that has committed the greatest crimes against humanity [i.e. Germany] has the highest percentage of literacy in the world. Literacy is a two-edged sword. The fundamental issue is not literacy, but literacy for what?" See Ibid., 180.
[10] Ibid., 234.

In this sense, the modern subject of FE's design was not the abstract, individuated self existing ontologically prior to nation and society; on the contrary, it was embedded within the shared, communal goal of "improving the life of the nation" and "imparting knowledge of the world."[11] Put simply, "Teaching must not result in 'denationalising the masses'," and the concrete ties between the individual and the social were to be pursued at the level of small communities. To this end, Isaac Kandel drew from a surprisingly global list of precedents, such as the Weimar regime's emphasis on *Heimatkunde* (study of the immediate environment of the pupils), Soviet Russia's attention to "socially useful activities," and American educational theory that had expanded its approach from being "child-centered" to "community-centered."[12] Kandel's use of U.S. Department of Agriculture's extension work is interesting because it both positions the U.S. case as exemplary *and* momentarily suspends the distinction between advanced versus undeveloped nations by calling attention to the fact that "backwards people" are a global phenomenon that wait to be addressed.[13]

At the heart of FE lay the question of how the intellectual, spiritual, ideological, and ritualistic legacies of traditional societies would be re-negotiated in its revolution of everyday life. In the definition of FE, and its place in the "total development of civilised life in our world,"[14] it is stated that "popular education must be progressive, positive, an introduction to a *new kind of life*" (emphasis added).[15] This process did not necessarily mean wiping the slate clean. While the program would leave behind forms of "ancient education" associated with "Islam, Confucianism, and Buddhism," it would seek to forge a "modern soul" by producing a

[11] Ibid., 128.
[12] Ibid., 181.
[13] Extension agents became a quite common figure in the South Korean countryside in the 1950s. The educational film "Happy Village Life," discussed later in this chapter, depicts the day-to-day experiences of one such agent.
[14] Ibid., 128.
[15] Ibid., 131.

"synthesis between traditional forces and ideas and the modern progressive movement through the schools."[16]

Perspectives on how the tension between the old and the new would be addressed varied. Cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead, for example, considered two possibilities in "Some Problems of World Educational Planning." One was simply to dissolve the existing "double hierarchy" (in which competing high-cultures—the Occident and the Orient—co-exist) into a "single hierarchy," privileging the Western "modern scientific industrial civilization" and "its political democracy." The second was to proceed with this process "slowly enough" so that the Orient could make its own civilizational contributions. Within this model, the role of the Orient would be to "complement," "counterpoint," and even "negate" some of the "dominant motifs" of Western civilization.[17] Mead eventually rejects the second model, arguing that cultures that have grown weak should "possibly be permitted to die,"[18] and settles on a softer version of the first possibility, which would ensure that "*ideas* of scientific approach" (emphasis in the original) become "genuinely blended with cultures other than top layers of Europe and Asia." For Mead, Japan is an ideal example of a society that had successfully transplanted the scientific approach with "no real alteration in the feudal form of the culture."[19]

Social anthropologist Margaret Read, on the other hand, appeared to avoid privileging "modern scientific industrial civilization" of the West as Mead had done, placing greater emphasis on the realm of the spiritual and underscoring the importance of the dignity of the individual. "The underprivileged groups have spiritual needs and aspirations which cannot be

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[16] Ibid., 131.
[17] At the organizational level, this second model could be pursued by 1) including China and/or India on "all high policy committees" 2) including "an Oriental language in all *original* drafts of important documents," 3) delegating "educational problems within the areas of influence of great Oriental or near-Eastern powers to those powers, rather than the construction of worldwide recommendations." See Ibid., 132-133.
[18] Ibid., 133.
[19] Ibid., 135. Interestingly, Mead speculates that late-comers might enjoy the advantage of being "deculturalised." They would be stronger, in a sense, due to their "flexibility and ability to take on new imprints." See Ibid., 153.

satisfied by even vastly improved material conditions," Read wrote. She stressed the importance of leisure in how one's private life was linked to the social whole. For a full life, a "[human being] must know…how to develop all the potentialities embodied in his own individuality; he must know how to get and promote security; how to enjoy beauty, truth, and goodness."[20]

One way to reconcile the modernizing need to eventually bring material and technological advancement to "backwards" society and the human need for spirituality, beauty, and goodness was to *re-sensitize* people's encounter with their everyday environment. Even in the poorest countries, recurring emphasis was placed on aesthetic education based in the materiality of everyday practices. For example, in Colombia, personal hygiene was linked to the urgency of "giving [the student] an esthetic conception of his school—cleanliness and good taste in condition of simplicity, or even poverty."[21] In India, homemaking for women was explained in terms of "beautification" in "simple ways, such as how to make a mud fireplace with a chimney, how to stencil artistic patterns on the wall instead of crude hand and finger marks, how to put in small windows and where; how to make beds and bedding look attractive."[22] In other words, it was not enough to learn how to read and internalize scientific or rational explanations about the world. The education had to entail re-seeing one's own environment, developing "good taste," and applying techniques for transforming one's environment that met the modern standard of aesthetic as well as functionality ("stencil" over "finger marks").

The utopic vision of re-orienting the sensory faculties of FE's subjects towards modernization and growth relied crucially on the transformative technological promise of audio-visual media. Speaking about FE in Africa, André Terrisse stated there appeared to be "unanimous agreement that the future of fundamental education is linked with the development

[20] Ibid., 177.
[21] Ibid., 28.
[22] Ibid., 90.

of audio-visual aids."[23] In his 1965 thesis, Thomas T. Taylor identifies two schools of thought regarding effective technique in education films. Some called for "extreme simplicity," while others were more ambitious in making use of "all the resources of the film medium" (panoramics, slow motion, accelerated motion, fading in or out, montages, etc.)[24] Simplicity meant that "shots will be taken, as far as possible, level with the eye, with very little movement of the camera, and will faithfully reproduce what is seen by the human eye,"[25] while the opposing viewpoint was more self-conscious of more sophisticated cinematic languages already circulating across urban sites of the developing world. In the remainder of this section, I will elaborate on the tensions underlying this postwar universalist discourse of audio-visual education, revealing the ways in which it was overdetermined by logics of enlightenment, mass culture, and militarism.

Norman Spurr serves as a useful case for tracing the evolving contours of this debate. Spurr, who worked as "an education officer and film pioneer"[26] in Uganda's colonial film unit, wrote in *Colonial Cinema* that "film audiences in East Africa were less advanced than their West African counterparts—where literacy rates were higher—and so proposed a less 'sophisticated' level of production."[27] His observation links one's educational status (specifically literacy) to one's sophistication as a viewer. In a statement made in 1948, Spurr is said to have been "apprehensive lest the proposed training course may be overloaded beyond the capacity of

[23] André Terrisse, "The Audio-Visual center for Fundamental Education in French West Africa," *Fundamental and Adult Education* 6, No. 2 (April, 1955): 58.
[24] Thomas Thompson Taylor III, "The Role of Film in UNESCO's Program of Fundamental Education" (MA thesis, University of Southern California, 1965), 49.
[25] L. Van Bever, "The Cinema as a Means of Education in the Belgian Congo," *Visual Aids in Fundamental Education: Press, Film and Radio in the World Today* (Paris: UNESCO, 1952), 61, quoted in Taylor, 49.
[26] George Pearson, *Flashback: The Autobiography of a British Filmmaker* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), quoted in http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/node/1012.
[27] *Why Not You?*, Colonial Film: Moving Images of the British Empire, accessed May 20, 2017, http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/node/1012.

African trainees."[28] According to Tom Rice's analysis, the film *Why Not You?* (directed by Spurr) "relies on repetition" to display the process of block making, and uses intercuts of "the process" with the "finished product" to "build up an association in the audience's mind." The film also lacks humor, which is noteworthy. Spurr had previously remarked, apparently from experience, "films designed to teach and films designed to entertain make poor bedfellows."[29] In other words, Spurr's approach towards cinematic pedagogy during the immediate postwar period was conservative and rigid; it sought to separate education and entertainment and strove for simplicity over complexity in technique.

Interestingly, Spurr put forth a different viewpoint in the September 1958 UNESCO Regional Seminar on "visual aids in fundamental education and community development," urging educators to challenge their viewers rather than underestimate their sophistication. "More people are experiencing and appreciating the impact of high quality material than ever before," he wrote, "and are becoming more critical of the older, more primitive forms."[30] He argued that improvement in transportation facilities and greater mobility between the city and the countryside will subject the villager to "more sophisticated material." This would naturally "arouse" their "critical faculty." In contrast to his earlier separation of education and entertainment films, he seems to call for the need of incorporating the visual techniques of commercial films for pedagogical success. "There is already an increasing penetration into rural areas of technically superior commercial media," he claimed, and "the challenge of such media

[28] Rosaleen Smyth, "The Post-War Career of the Colonial Film Unit in Africa: 1946-1955," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 12, no.2, 1992, 170, quoted in http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/node/1012

[29] Smyth, 171, quoted in http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/node/1012 . Along the same lines, Spurr remarked in 1952, "How many times have I seen the whole effect of teaching disappear in the gusts of laughter greeting Charlie Chaplin. Films for fundamental education are not made to pass a pleasant hour, or as a medium of escape from a tedious round; nor are they some commodity to be made and sold; they are something to be used." See Norman F. Spurr, "Some Aspects of the Work of the Colonial Film Unit," Visual Aids in Fundamental Education: Press. Film, and Radio in the World Today (Paris: UNESCO, 1952), 37, quoted in Taylor, 45.

[30] Romesh Thapar, "Visual Aids in Fundamental Education and Community Development: Report on the UNESCO Regional Seminar in South and South-East Asia held in New-Delhi, India, 8-27 September 1958," UNESCO,10.

is…a challenge for attention."[31] Audio-visual enlightenment would have to adopt the strategies of mass-mediated culture.

If FE was conceived as a conscientious break from totalizing forms of mass control reminiscent of the wartime era, it continued to deploy the triumphalist and transformative rhetoric and trope of mobilization. Within the domain of linguistic education, I.A. Richards, a literary theorist primarily remembered for his contributions to the formalist movement of New Criticism, wrote with great enthusiasm regarding the role that new audio-visual media would play in language acquisition. He is particularly interested in the power of motion in conveying "unambiguous observable action":

> The argument for motion is that…the learner's attention needs to be energized by the utmost vividness, variety and relevant drama of presentation. And for this the sound motion picture has no rival. *It may be worth adding that certain peoples reported to be unable to see still drawings as representative are alleged to follow actions in motion pictures without difficulty* (emphasis added). On theoretical grounds, motion may be expected to assist the perceptual grasp of the configurations of words in a number of ways. Writing, in one aspect, is applied dancing.[32]

Technically mediated representation of motion has the universal power to overcome the limits of cultural and linguistic differences (of "*certain peoples*"). Language pedagogy, he seems to be saying, must rely on the unfolding reciprocity between image, sound, and text as they are presented to the viewer-learner via a sound motion film. The task at hand is an urgent one. Employing a deliberate military metaphor, he writes, "[recently developed instruments of instruction] dwarf past modes almost as the atomic bomb dwarfs our former instruments of destruction" and admit that "these newly emerged ways of affecting others' minds are already under heavy suspicion."[33] Towards the end of his essay, Richards goes beyond the realm of linguistic instruction, to discuss instructional films in general, and writes hopefully about their

[31] Ibid, 10.
[32] Special Committee to the Preparatory Commission of UNESCO, 229.
[33] Ibid., 230.

future (again drawing links to military technology): "no sustained experimental work comparable to the work put into designing and testing a new model of a car, a plane or a destroyer has as yet been put into the improvement of a teaching picture."[34] Though he concludes the essay by emphasizing potential for future development, he never resolves the tension of the threat (which he articulates rather forcefully) "we exposed ourselves to…when we developed speech"[35] whose expansion through communications networks now "subject more and more people to exploitation by suasion, commercial and political."[36] In the end, Richards does offer a vision of the future in which human beings and technology exist in effective harmony. The human is augmented, enriched by strategically syncing and re-syncing to the movements of the machine, and yet, in the figure of the teacher, who can devote his "time and energy" (freed when the machine takes care of the mechanical aspects) to "the problems of the individuals—which no machine can handle."[37]

Despite his vision of a utopic harmonious relationship between humans and machine, he never reconciles the deeper tension between emancipation and manipulation that human beings were exposed to with the development of speech. The threat of exploitation has only been compounded by the development of mass communications. The very techniques of forging cognitive (and by extension emotional) associations in language acquisition, he seems to suggest, might be channeled towards ideological suasion or other inimical political goals.

FE's approach towards rural education of the non-linguistic sort also drew from the rhetoric of mobilization. Consider, for example, Taylor's account of Andre Terrisse's approach

[34] Ibid., 233.
[35] Ibid., 230.
[36] Ibid., 231.
[37] Ibid. 228.

towards mobile education units emphasizes the "spectacular nature of fundamental education as carried out by roving teams"[38]:

> These teams would descend on a village with their experts, projectors, lights and loudspeakers, stay long enough to carry out a project, and then depart. [Terrisse] concluded that the notions imparted would soon be overcome by the realities of daily life, but that the village would never be the same. The people would have acquired confidence in themselves and in others, and the hope was that they could improve their lives.[39]

While Terrisse's viewpoint was criticized by some as short-sighted and overly propagandistic to work as "genuine education,"[40] it successfully underscored the broader, radically transformative, action-oriented ethos of FE, a movement of "world scale" which would be carried out ("attacked by co-operative action") despite local and national differences.[41] In the chapter entitled "Noteworthy Examples," the editorial committee of *Fundamental Education* concedes that it would be preferable to analyze the different sites, not according to geographic location, but according to "stages of advancement." While regretfully presenting the materials according to geography, the committee goes on to emphasize that

> the outcome to be desired is action, whether on the part of the peoples concerned, the governments involved, or UNESCO—or all of these….some action—action as wise as may be, as fully informed as possible, yet *action*—is the ever-recurrent plea of those who are giving their lives to the work of fundamental education in the remoter and needier areas of the world: and their plea should not be gainsaid for the sake of refinement of technique or documentation.[42]

Based on debates regarding the core principles of FE, we can see that the program's ideology was riddled with contradictions. The first contradiction was one of individual freedom and social responsibility. While FE appeared to champion the individual's right to fulfill his human potential through basic education, the program was also deeply invested in the process of

[38] Taylor, "The Role of Film in UNESCO," 28.
[39] Ibid., 28-29.
[40] Ibid., 29.
[41] Special Committee to the Preparatory Commission of UNESCO, 124.
[42] Ibid., 23.

producing socially-conditioned subjects embedded both locally and nationally. The second contradiction had to do with the relationship between literacy and audio-visual media. The potential for mass education and emancipation also inherently contained the threat of ideological indoctrination. The third contradiction was civilizational, best encapsulated by Margaret Mead's discussion of "double hierarchy" that would have to be dissolved in favor of a "modern scientific industrial civilization." The question of how different traditional ways of life, as well as spiritual needs of human beings, would be incorporated into modern, developed societies remained contested and vaguely defined.

KORFEC: Ideological Interpellation through Knowledge, Skill, and Desire

Originally built in Suwon and equipped by the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) as a joint project between U.N. and the South Korean government, the Korean Fundamental Education Center (KORFEC) was just one of many FE centers established around the world. The center was equipped with lecture rooms, studios, staff quarters, and student dorms. UNESCO took over operations from January 1, 1957 until the end of 1958. The qualifications for recruitment were Korean men and women who were high-school graduates (the men had to have completed military service while the women had to be over twenty years old). KORFEC initially opened on November 19, 1957 under director Howard Hayden.[43] Hayden was "obliged to resign the directorship in August 1957 upon UNESCO's instruction" and reassigned to a post in Thailand. L. Hernandez-Cabrera was promoted as the second director of the center. By the first anniversary of KORFEC, it is stated that the foreign experts headed by Hernandez-

[43] The staff members on inauguration are as follows: Howard Hayden - British Fundamental Education Director, L. Hernandez- Cabrera - Mexican - Fundamental Education, G.C. Clark - Canadian – Agriculture, T.R. Conant - American - Audio-Visual Aid, F. Van der Plas (Miss) - Dutch – Health, Yoon Kil Byung - Korean - Fundamental Education, Choi Hyung Tae - Korean – Agriculture, Park Ik Soon Korean - Audio-Visual Aid , Kim Chi Hwa - Korean - Home Economics, Kim Kyung-ok - Korean - Health.

Cabrera would be replaced eventually by Korean staff. By January of 1958, new officials entered the Ministry of Education. According to Hernandez-Cabrera, he began "to have trouble with them…I have done my best to approach them diplomatically." He later concludes, "it is my conviction that nothing could have changed their prejudices against us as foreigners." Activities of the center formally ceased on November 1, 1959.[44]

The purpose of KORFEC was to provide "education in the fundamentals of daily life," to help rural people "help themselves" and to "help them live fuller and happier lives by giving them an understanding of their own problems, and *knowledge, the skills* and *desire* to solve these problems by their own united efforts" (emphasis added).[45] While the functional dimension of the program seemed to privilege the autonomy of the local actors, the success of KORFEC would still be measured based on to what extent it could mobilize the desires of the villagers towards predetermined goals. If "skills" and "desire" to solving problems of underdevelopment point to the functional and ideological dimensions of FE, respectively, the task of producing "knowledge" captured the sociological and ethnographic dimension of the program. KORFEC was directly responsible for conducting research for "further economic, social, and cultural development," which entailed knowledge-production about the local community at hand.

Knowledge-production about the local community was an integral part of KORFEC's agenda. The effectiveness of audio-visual media functioned through *representation, technical know-how,* and *social awakening*. Audio-visual media was a means of providing representations

[44] In the final report filed July 31, 1959, it delares of the 24 students (6 women, 18 men) who entered in November of 1956, 21 graduated, 2 dropped out, 1 failed the final exam. Of the graduates, 3 were employed by the Institute of Agriculture, 3 with the Office of Economic Coordinator (part of ICA), and 15 with NACOM (National Council of Community Development, which was operated under Ministry of Reconstruction). Of the second group admitted in March of 1957, there were 29 students (6 women, 23 men). 2 women and 6 men dropped out; rest graduated March of 1959. 4 women and 5 men were employed by NACOM. The rest were not accepted because they had not served in the military. The Ministry of Education's decision to discontinue KORFEC was against Hayden's recommendation.

[45] Choi Sung Jun, *A Brief History of Rural Leaders Training Centre (Korean Fundamental Education Centre): some crude collections of reprinted materials of old documents and letters* (Suwŏn: n.a., 1961), 14.

of the community, its problems, and potential solutions. They also worked to instill technical knowledge about variety of audio-visual media tools and equipment (and in this regard, the aforementioned "skills" included not only the skills to resolve problems but the technical know-how to represent them properly to a local audience). Finally, the process of knowledge-production entailed raising a socially-oriented consciousness in both the rural leaders and their village subjects. As Foucault claims in *Discipline and Punish*, "power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth."[46] In Foucault's case, the knowledge of the individual is foregrounded ("The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production"); within the context of KORFEC, this individual was necessarily embedded within the community, which existed as a domain of objects to be known though audio-visually mediated rituals of truth.

The ethos of KORFEC privileged certain holistic awareness of one's community environment over specialized forms of knowledge. The training was meant to help trainees see "village life…as a whole." What was needed was the ability to "appreciate the whole problem" and "bring to bear on it the many resources, available skills, good will and enthusiasm, co-operative effort, improved methods, unexplored sources of income, better methods of management, and pleasure in relaxation, *which lie at present hidden in every community*" (emphasis added).[47] The impulse for a totalizing, structuralizing representation of the community, in this sense, worked within the modality of realism akin to the streetscape-reportage realism discussed in Chapter 1. Both sought to make visible social problems that lay hidden in the everyday-eye of ordinary people. While the post-liberation urban streetscape-reportage privileged the individualized perspective, peripatetic impressions and encounters,

[46] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, (London: Penguin, 1991), 194.
[47] Choi, *Brief History,* 67.

modernist aesthetics, the "realism" of KORFEC sought to institutionalize a positivist, de-historicized, and rationalizing mode of representing communal reality.

Perhaps the most striking aspect the KORFEC curriculum was its wide-ranging social scientific interests, covering "cultural anthropology" (concept of culture, its paradoxes, commonalities across cultures, Korean culture), "sociology" (man and his environment, rural vs. urban, role of women in rural life, concept of race, Korean family and community), "social psychology" (learning processes, rural attitudes, democratic vs. authoritative leadership), "education" (its evolution, relationship to social structure). FE was described as drawing "no distinction between race, class, or creed." At the same time, it did not seek to erase cultural differences, believing that its practices "must not harm the essentials of their cultural patterns" while bringing improvement to communities. Finally, FE was not simply a means of observing or accounting for one's way of life in an effort to systematically improve it. On the contrary, it would become incorporated into the fabric of life. FE, while "trying to improve life, becomes as complex as life itself." In other words, FE in its ideal form would become part-and-parcel of *saenghwal*.

When KORFEC formally closed its operations, D. McLaren (the former Community Development Advisor of KORFEC), dropped the term "Fundamental Education" opting for "community development" under USOM management.[48] The Korean Government reclassified the centre as a junior college and took over its operation. McLaren praised the students as "among the best material I had come across," but criticizes the performance of the students in fieldwork saying there had been insufficient preparation. He wrote that "there was a lack of

[48] After the Mutual Security Act of 1954 dissolved the Foreign Operation Administration (FOA), United States Operations Missions was established in countries receiving aid from the United States. USOM field offices were coordinated under International Cooperation Administration (ICA), which ran semi-autonomously within the State Department.

planning and direction in the students' fieldwork." They were described as impulsive ("think up projects on the spur of the moment"), derivative ("copy them from students in other villages"), or described as treating KORFEC as relief centers. The students, in McLaren's assessment, had not been properly guided ("left to their own devices" "not shown how to apply their technical knowledge…for carrying out…their day-to-day work.") The Korean staff "preferred theoretical teaching…to practical application" to the detriment of the program's effectiveness. The real source of McLaren's dissatisfaction is revealed in the following comment: "I personally cannot subscribe to the doctrine current here that 'we're here to train students and not to run village projects.'" In other words, McLaren was questioning the very notion that these trainees could be successfully transformed into self-motivated, self-helping enlightenment subjects. (His view seemed to be that village projects should be run directly by the foreign staff.)

According to KORFEC's final report, we can see that the frustrations experienced by the non-Korean leaders of KORFEC were not unfounded, particularly in regards to the ROK government's attitude towards the program. The Ministry of Education was eager to send more Korean students abroad for training rather than import foreign talent for technical and other educational purposes. Shifting our attention, then, to the remarkable case of Choi Sung Jun, the director of the Rural Leaders Training Centre (RLTC), we will trace how a South Korean administrator of the rural development program understood the purpose of KORFEC.

Choi Sung Jun's *Brief History of Rural Leader Training Center (KORFEC)*

By no means did the ideological legacy of KORFEC vanish when it was formally shut down. Choi Sung Jun, the director of Rural Leader Training Center (RLTC) would continue the

work under a different banner.[49] (For example, the curriculum of RLTC continued to use the term "Fundamental Education" without modification.) Much of the information I cite here comes from a volume edited by Choi Sung Jun, in which he acts as the archivist of KORFEC after its dissolution even while he administers the organization's afterlife. Notably, Choi travelled to a number of countries on a UNESCO-sponsored fellowship to study adult education and community development projects. He spent three months in the U.S. (two and a half months at the George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee), followed by travels to London, Copenhagen, Paris, Rome, Bangkok, and Saigon. Worth noting is the format in which he conveys his "impressions, feelings and thoughts" during this "busy and eventful" trip: in the form of a diary in a section called "Pages from My Diary." What makes this document remarkable and more than simply a boilerplate report chronicling a successfully-executed fellowship is the rich range of registers it contains. (There are moments of whimsy and self-absorption, as well as cursory and fleeting observations.) To be sure, Choi's tone can be pious, even ingratiating, [50] but certain passages betray his critical attitude towards community development as primarily a universalist socio-economic modernization campaign. Indeed, what emerges from this "diary" is a desire to understand Korea's *civilizational* and *spiritual* past as structurally undergirding the path to its future. Choi's ideas run directly counter to the articulation of FE philosophy in UNESCO-sponsored conferences and among local KORFEC administrators based in Suwon.

[49] Choi Sung Jun, *A Brief History of Rural Leaders Training Centre (Korean Fundamental Education Centre): some crude collections of reprinted materials of old documents and letters*, (Suwŏn: n.a., 1961).
[50] Washington, for example, is described as "comparatively old and quiet and the most beautiful city I saw in America." (March 17). He dwells on his sense of isolation in New York. He quotes the inscription on the State of Liberty, and comments earnestly, "I could feel the greatness of American democracy in gazing at the Statue" (March 19) "Cornell is really beautiful" (March 23).

A thread that runs continuously throughout the report is Choi's interest in religiosity. In one instance, he discussed community development work with young McCauleys who served in both Iran and Korea. Afterwards, he attended a Quaker gathering where they meditate in the library room "without an altar or creeds or preachers."

> After a considerable period of meditation one, two, three people opened their mouths and expressed their views, i.e. science vs. religion; world peace and the Summit Conference on Atomic energy control, disarmament, retrenchment, etc. They seem to me as if they were adopting Gandhism or Chinese Taoism, denying all sorts of established churches and creeds and doctrines. *Still, I am thinking about the religious symbols and mass education.* (emphasis added)[51]

Attempts to bring "world peace," "disarmament," and "retrenchment" are understood by Choi through a religious rather than a secular framework. Yet the "religious symbols" he has in mind do not conform to any "established churches and creeds and doctrines" (as conceptualized by FE), but a broader spiritual and humanist orientation of what he calls Gandhism or Chinese Taoism.

Even more surprising is the fact that Choi's observation of American society was not always flattering. He commented on the sit-down strikes at the cafeteria in the South, comparing the public sentiment towards racial inequality between the North and the South, the summit conference at Geneva with Russia's "proposal for the total abolishment of Atom bomb tests" and reduction of armaments, U.S. response to the South Korean presidential election ("Democratic American people have become more unsympathetic towards Korea." The undemocratic climate in South Korea, the Philippines and Free China i.e. Taiwan, are "least welcome to the American nation") Here Choi is primarily concerned with the fate of South Korea were U.S. to exclude ROK from its "defense line." "Can Korea survive alone?" The priority in the U.S. at this time seems to be opening up trade channel with "Red China."

[51] Choi, *Brief History,* 270-272.

Choi also comments extensively on the mechanized quality of American society. American enjoyment of life in an "earthly paradise," created through their "abundant resources, both personal and natural" is described with breathless enthusiasm. Furthermore, mechanization does not create a lifeless existence; Choi emphasizes that the work proceeds "creatively along with mechanization, physically and mentally." Individual freedom is the "basis for growth of American democracy" and "the authority of the state" is "subject to the will of the individual." When he arrived in England, he observed an interesting contrast in national temperament, how the British are "stabilized and quiet and yet are alert" while Americans had a "love of adventure and are restless for…new sensation." The British are said to be thrifty, reasonable, practicing continued use of manual labor, comparable to the United States. They are humorous and informal, "and at the same time love historic ceremonies." He also takes care to capture a detail from an everyday moment: "I saw old men and women rise up early in the morning and clean their houses and the walks in front of them."

His April 18th entry in Paris is especially intriguing. After encountering a "colder attitude" by the European public regarding Korea's situation and the amount of American aid South Korea is receiving (and may be going to waste), Choi abruptly changed the course of the diary to "return to my tourist path." He compares Paris's "structure" to that of New York and London, especially about the broad streets, the parks at the center of city, memorial towers, bronze and marble statues, the "thousand-acres of wide parks," the "beautiful flowers and grasses." His attention turns to the artistic treasures of the Renaissance—Mona Lisa ("What a complex of impressions!")—and finally concludes, "no one can genuinely understand the true sense of European culture, art, and music without careful study of Christianity and the Renaissance ideas…I think that the western cultures are derived from Christian faiths." While

considering the influences of the French Revolution and the British Industrial Revolution and other progressive moments, he returns to the idea that "at the bottom of western life Christianity is enshrined."

> I want to study and understand the influences of French Catholicism over her artistic performances, free but ritual expression in English literature versus her Protestant Anglican Church, and the gay and open minded individualistic life of the Danes against the Lutheran faith! Then what is the national religion of Korea? *Is Buddhism or Confucianism the norm on which our Korean life is truly conducted?*[52] (emphasis added)

In the flow of this diary entry, we see a shift from the realm of the visible—observation about architecture, city planning—to that of the invisible—the spiritual core that animates Western civilization. Recent scholarship on Cold War perception of the American culture by Chang Sejin, for example, has shown that Korean observers of American culture did not merely focus on the mechanical aspect of American culture, but its thrift, lack of ostentatiousness—a spiritual core that animated it.[53] What is special about the case of Choi Sung Jin is his capacity as a director of a rural leaders training center, that his intellectual interest would skew towards the spiritual. While the original debates by the architects of FE focused on the importance of morality and spirituality—an open admission that human beings could not be reduced to his or her biological, material and technical needs—the focus was not on the spiritual basis of society but rather on the glue that held societies together. For Choi, what engages him perhaps even more so than the surface splendor of Western *saenghwal* is the religious origins that continue to undergird and animate it.

That this entry occurs before the news of the outbreak of the April Revolution in 1960 makes his comments even more suggestive. His April 20th entry is written about Rome. Choi writes matter-of-factly, "Rome is the fountain of Western Culture. The historical remains in and

[52] Choi, *Brief History*, 276.
[53] Chang Sejin, *Imagined America* (Sŏul-si: P'urŭnyŏksa, 2012), 222.

out of Rome speak of the rise and fall of the Grecian, Roman Heathen and Christian civilization." He goes on, "Again, I deeply felt the necessity for studying the history of Christianity, western cultures and Renaissance, in order to better understand the West." He changes the topic abruptly then to say, "Upon my arrival in Rome this morning I came across the big news of the outbreak of the student anti-government movements in Korea, and all of my mind was absorbed in this from today on. I have lost my interest for sightseeing and observation of community development works, etc., and hastening my return trip. I must shorten my programs in Bangkok and Saigon."

The authenticity of Choi Sung Jin's "Pages from My Diary" in *Brief History* should be approached neither with complete credulity nor with reflexive dismissiveness. I understand the document's inclusion by Choi as a conscious discursive strategy. Rather than seeing the entries as a transparent window into Choi's experiences during these months, it is more useful to understand Choi's impressions, opinions, and reflections carefully curated therein functioning to supplement and subvert the dominant ideological narrative of fundamental education. Choi's civilizational reflections in particular deserve comparison to Margaret Mead's remarks on "double hierarchy," in which she called for the dissolving away of antiquated forms of the Oriental civilization in favor of the "modern scientific industrial civilization." Interestingly, Choi was explicit about what motivated his desire to learn about the reciprocal relationship between art (literature, performance), religion, and way of life within the context of French, English, and Danish society. The goal was not transplantation or absorption of Western values, as Mead might have urged, but a comparative heuristic that would allow Koreans to discover for themselves "the norm" that conditioned Korean *saenghwal*.

The Diary and the Photograph: Female Rural Leaders in the Popular Imagination

The diary is, by definition, a record of experiences, usually of a private nature, and self-reflective about the events discussed. In the case of Choi Sung Jin, the diary functioned as a tool of discursive intervention by a creative archivalist, inserting his own personal philosophical reflections that countered FE's homogenizing, universalist developmentalist discourse. In this section, I discuss how the diary as a representational genre of quotidian temporality and affect was appropriated and combined with the genre of photojournalism to produce a gendered subject of rural enlightenment in the late-1950s. The figure of the female rural leader has been mostly ignored in the existing cultural-studies scholarship of postwar South Korea, which has tended to focus on gender issues linked to displacement, widowhood, or Korean female subjectivity linked to U.S. geopolitical hegemony, such as the Western princess or the *ap'uregŏl* phenomenon (discussed in Chapter 4). The two primary examples of my analysis come from a piece of photographic reportage [Figure 20] in the popular women's monthly *Yŏwŏn* and a close-reading of USOM-sponsored film "Happy Rural Life."

Yŏwŏn's profile of Kim Yŏngja, a twenty-five-year-old leader of a community development project is photographically depicted sitting on a hill overlooking a village.[54] Such images of protagonist/subject of a narrative looking over a town, a village, or a city appear numerously during this period, in illustrations for literary fiction, camera-novels, and not least, the scene in Han Hŭkgu's novel-serial *Looking Down at the Village* discussed at the beginning of this chapter. While these instances call for individualized analysis, both *Yŏwŏn*'s profile of Kim Yŏngja and Han's novel do have something important in common; that is, the gaze of the protagonists embodies the aforementioned "realism" of the rural enlightenment subject that is able to imagine or visualize the community in its entirety. The caption printed below the

[54] "Dreaming of Utopia," *Yŏwŏn*, November 1959.

photograph reads, “Look! This is my land, my village. This village, which is surrounded by mountains on all sides, feels isolated from the grime of culture—no, it’s village in its original pristine form that has yet to be sullied.”

Figure 20. Profile on rural enlightenment leader Kim Yŏngja
Source: *Yŏwŏn*

The linking of rural space with cultural purity (“original pristine form”) and unsullied past is reminiscent of the national imaginary located in artistic and literary representations of the countryside during the 1920s-1930s in colonial Korea. Yet, as I will show in this section, the South Korean countryside of the postwar 1950s, situated within the developmentalist imaginary, was not merely relegated to the realm of the primordial past. On the contrary, it provided a way of imagining an alternate modern future that would overcome urban living’s entrenchment in decadence and corruption. For example, in the case of Kim Yŏngja’s diary, while she does rehearse some of the familiar pastoral tropes of village life—“cozy and beautiful” or “utopia” (*yisanghyang*)—the village is also described as being something more than merely a place of refuge from “depression,” “theft,” and “decadence” (*tek’adang*); rather, it offered “the sound promise of tomorrow.”

The figure of the female rural leaders were distinct from the colonial-period images of women engaging in agricultural labor while emplaced within the rolling landscape. While the latter had served as passive object of the nostalgic gaze of the male intellectual, the female rural leaders were depicted as active agents of socio-historical transformation. Indeed, Kim Yŏngja is described by another villager as "capable of accomplishing anything," a female intellectual (*int'eriyŏsŏng*) who commands the respect of other villagers. During this period, it was not uncommon to find forms of Western, urban, and consumerist excess embodied in representations of young women in monthly magazines, particularly in caricature in comics—depicted as vain, materialistic, licentious, and morally bankrupt. To neutralize the threat of this contamination, the image of exemplary female rural leader is carefully calibrated. Kim's complexion is described as dark and "wholesome," her way of dress is practical, and her mingling with the opposite sex is wholly professional in nature. "Now that I've become basically a 'middlesex' (*chungsŏng*)," she quips, "nobody asks me out on dates."

The feature article accompanying the photographic diary of Kim Yŏngja characterized the postwar "community development" (CD) project as distinct from its colonial predecessor *and* as existing outside the purview of South Korean government support.[55] In both cases, the rhetoric of differentiation deployed a discourse of moral rectitude. The ultimate failure of the *saenghwal* improvement programs of the colonial era was attributed to the facts that the movements were led by "communist sympathizers" and contained "inflammatory elements." These efforts had been, therefore, "unsound and "unwholesome" (*pul'on*). The CD pilot project was described as harbinger of a "new era" (*sinkiwŏn*). Interestingly, while the virtues of the 4H programs ("hand, health, heart, and head") are traced to their origins in the American towns in the South half-a-century ago, by and large, the economic, organizational, and institutional debt to U.S. aid and

[55] "Dreaming of Utopia," *Yŏwŏn*, November 1959, 58.

influence was elided in *Yŏwŏn*'s account of CD. Notably absent in the article's consideration, also, was the role of the South Korean government in these efforts. CD's ideal was an "ideology of sacred mindfulness" that would foster a self-sustaining community that could build itself up without "benefits from the government." Such a community would be at once productively competitive and mutually nurturing, the competitive element spurring on progress and contributing to economic soundness. "Widows without labor power," for example, would find support from others. "The objective is not to live well by yourself," the article states, "but to work towards the prosperity of the whole town."

By positioning Kim Yŏngja as the primary subject of the profile and framing the current state and future potential of the village within Kim's caring and hopeful gaze, her personal vision of the town was linked inextricably, in the reader's mind, with the fate of the village itself. Her daily achievements and setbacks became stand-ins for the triumphs and challenges of the village as a whole. In this sense, the photographic diary signified more than the inner thoughts of an individual—it represented the shared yearnings of the townspeople.

The second case I consider is the 1959 educational film "Delightful Village Household," the stated purpose of which was to "enlighten women in the farm villages" and to "capture the activities of the home extension agent who can play an active role in improving the domestic life of the farm village." The film's opening sequence shows a home extension agent returning to her house and opening her "instructional diary" to reflect on all that has happened since she was selected to be an instructor. The English-language version of the shooting script reads, "Miss Lee…is gleeful, though a little tired…A glance to the still pictures on the desk which were taken at the National Institute of Agriculture slowly leads Miss Lee to flashback to her past from the day when she was picked up as an agent, to the days which was receiving training at the Institute

and to the late activities she is leading at the village."[56] The story is simple. Miss Lee is tying to bring improvement to the villagers' living standards. Some, like Myonggil's mother, are supportive, while others, like Sooni's parents, are not.[57] Eventually, Sooni's mother becomes convinced that Lee's effects on the village are positive and will substantially benefit the quality of her family's own life.

Before considering the significance of the diary and the photograph in this film, I will discuss two crucial elements of enlightenment films as a genre: *the visualization of the problem* and *the moment of enlightenment*. Though USOM's stated objective of the film was to "capture the activities of the home extension agent," since these "activities" are primarily solving problems that the village face as a whole, the film had to have a way of representing these problems for the actors and for the audience. Indeed, we can see this concern reflected in the shooting script of another education film, which begins, "A typical Korean village shown from a distance looks charming and picturesque. *As the camera moves closer* it shows mud and dirt in the street and around the village well. Similarly in the home. A child unhealthy in appearance, is shown eating with the family, the table indicating an inadequate diet, with flies competing for the food" (emphasis added). The camera's advancement towards its subject is more than the closing of physical distance; it's an epistemological and an aesthetic shift. We move from the pastoral gaze, which appreciates a "charming and picturesque" scene of the countryside, to a problem-solving visuality—the gaze of a civil engineer, a doctor, a nutritionist, or an epidemiologist. In other words, for Miss Lee's "activities" to be effective, what must change is how the villagers visualize their environment; like the camera that "moves closer," they must internalize a way of

[56] Project 489-96-438 "Improvement of Technical Information Services," 956/309, The National Archives of Korea.
[57] In this section, I follow the Romanization of Korean names as they appear in the English-language script.

seeing that understands their everyday circumstances as being rife with problems that require practical reflection and solution.

The second crucial element of educational films is the moment of enlightenment itself. For some, like Myonggil's mother, the change comes easily and early on. But for a character like Sooni's mother, who is stubbornly set in her ways, the change occurs more slowly. First, when Sooni's little brother comes home crying with his clothes torn and Miss Lee provides Sooni's mother with activity clothes (*hwaldongpok*, described as "fatigue-pants" in English), the script declares that "Sooni's mother, seeing the new clothing, nods—now she is beginning to realize something *though unconscious*" (emphasis added). In a later scene, when Sooni's mother visits the home of Myonggil's mother and sees "the play pen, improved bean paste, new close in the kitchen, new cooking tables, etc." the script explains, "she now *fully realizes* what Agent Lee is doing to help and improve the village life" (emphasis added). What is "fully realized" is not only what Agent Lee's role is supposed to be, but the fuller meaning of the call of enlightenment that Agent Lee represents. When this moment of recognition is mirrored by the viewer of the educational film, the viewer has been interpellated into audio-visual enlightenment.

Now we can discuss the function of the diary and the photograph in this process of subjectification. As disparate forms of media, they act as potential portals into spatio-temporal alterity. The task of the enlightenment film, then, is to tame their potential wildness and suggest, instead, a straightforward trajectory—namely, a temporal logic of social and material transformation that is brought about through enlightenment and informed action. The final sequence of "Delightful Farm Village Household" shows a close-up of the "fatigue pants" worn by Sooni's father, which dissolves to a close-up of a fatigue-pants design sketched in Miss Lee's instructional diary. The graphic match suggests a causal chain. Either her earlier design has

become a reality (her plan for the community becoming actualized) or the sketch is a record of what has become a reality (her log for the achievements underway)—perhaps both. What inspired the flashback in the beginning of the film was a photograph of Miss Lee on the day she arrived in the village. In this way, the diary and the photograph work together to maintain a linear temporality from past to present, a trajectory that emphasize obstacles overcome and progress underway. The sentimental association of the diary and the personal photograph (it is significant, for example, that this self-reflective moment is staged in the privacy of Miss Lee's own room) and their relationship with memory allow the narrative to reconcile the distinctions of personal/private and past/present/future, into a harmoniously unified temporality.

Metacinema, Education Films, and Intermediality

According to Principal Kim from Tŏkŭn Elementary School in Kyŏnggi-do, Koyang-gun, who was reporting on the effectiveness of the community enlightenment program, a useful way of generating interest in their endeavors was to produce audio recordings of local residents and their children. In order to combat the problem of low attendance in parent-teachers conference (which hovered around 25-30%), the staff would visit the parents in their homes in the evenings with the audio recorder and play them recordings of their children. This would immediately generate interest among the parents. Furthermore, he stated, "During the roundtables where the adults were present, we would make an audio recording of their statements without their knowledge and play it back for them afterwards. The effect was huge. It was particularly useful in persuading the school parents who'd shown hostility towards our projects."[58]

A "designated research school" (reminiscent of the school in Ha Kŭnch'an's short story "Crimson Hills" discussed at the end of Chapter 2), Tŏkŭn Elementary School undertook a

[58] "Chiyŏksahoe kyemongŭi kirok" [record of community enlightenment], *Saegyoyuk*, July 1959, 36.

program called, "My Hometown and My School, Realized Through The Audio-Visual"[59] The audio-visual here is likely a shorthand for "audio-visual education," that is to say, the students are attempting to improve their hometown and school with the tools of audio-visual education. There is still another way of reading this: to suggest that it is through audio-visual technology that their hometown and school *come into being*, i.e. became fulfilled (*iruŏjida* is the verb used). This is, in fact, not far from how the architects of FE envisioned the role of audio-visual technology. KORFEC training was meant to produce a mental representation of "village life…as a whole" among the trainees. The social-scientific methodology combined with the technical apparatus of audio-visual intermediation would re-configure the residents' understanding of their own community and their place as modern subjects within it.

In this section, I analyze key interpellative strategies with which audio-visual media facilitated this process of representational "fulfillment." In the case of Koyang-gun, mobilizing the residents and the students entailed producing audio recordings of residents to stir interest and encourage involvement. This phenomenon of technology-as-attraction was critical not only for drawing the Koyang-gun residents closer to it, but for reproducing their voices in their mediated forms. The picturing of the audio-visually mediated village, then, entailed the incorporation and absorption of the townspeople into audio-visual representations. The interpellation process—that is to say, the process by which audio-visual representations hailed the audience with the call to be enlightened—required a moment of identification whereby the audience member came to recognize himself or herself in the mediated representation.

I argue here that metacinematic visuality played an important role in naturalizing the process of technically-mediated interpellation in educational films. In his recent book, *Metacinema in Contemporary Chinese Film,* Andrew Stuckey identifies two forms of

[59] Ibid., 36-37.

metacinema.[60] The first is the *mise-en-abîme*, in which film contains within itself "the processes involved in producing a film," or performs some other kind of recursivity or self-reflexivity. The second is metacinema as "intertextual act of quotation in which a previous film is cited within the text of the current film."[61] In commercial or artistic films, the effect of this form of self-reflexivity usually interrupts the audience's immersion within the film's diegetic space, calling attention to the very constructedness of the film itself, so that the illusion of reality, along with the cinematic "fourth wall," is interrupted or broken. Within educational films, I argue, the metacinematic operation was useful for 1) naturalizing the modern subject of spectator-actor and 2) underscoring the productive potential of cinema, as both knowledge-building and world-making.

Were we to understand the reflexivity of the first form of metacinema—a film containing "the processes involved in producing a film"—more broadly across multiple media forms, its operation would be no different from *intermedial reflexivity,* which I defined in Chapter 1, as "a moment when the content of a medium self-consciously references another medium that it is collaborating with or competing against within the broader cultural field particularly in service of shared social goals and audience desires." The preferred function of the deployed media, in this case of enlightenment programs, was collaboration rather than competition, going beyond the realm of cinema as such to include typewriters, poster boards, film strips, slide projectors, and audio recorders. A recurring motif in cultural and educational films was to show audio-visual specialists, rural leaders, and residents working with, marveling at, or learning through these devices [Figure 21].

[60] Andrew Stuckey, *Metacinema in Contemporary Chinese Film* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017), 3-4.

Figure 21. Stills from "Fundamental Education: Rural Enlightenment Campaign"

As emphasized earlier in the chapter, the function of FE was, from its very inception, predicated on the idea that audio-visual technology could be deliberately deployed to bring about mass enlightenment worldwide. Hence, the metacinematic function in educational films was not to deconstruct (by placing the viewer in the proverbial "abyss"—*abîme*—via playful recursivity and reflexivity) or introduce intertextual citational density to the filmic texts (as might have been the case in commercial or arts films), but to interpellate the viewer into a naturalized ritual of spectatorship and mobilization that would be part-and-parcel of becoming modernizing subjects in rural Korea.

"Lighthouse on the Streets" (1955) produced in USIS's film studio in Sangam, offers a stunning example of interpellative metacinematic visuality at work. The film, directed by Kim Yŏngkwŏn and sponsored by the Deahan Boy's Cultural Center, follows the story of a down-and-out refugee boy, thirteen-year-old An Hongsik, who is enrolled in a children's rehabilitation

center, and ultimately becomes a productive member of society. At just over 37 minutes, the film takes its time to develop the viewer's understanding of the boy protagonist's troubled past. For example, when An is in class and a girl student is reading out loud from the textbook, he is shown not paying attention. The close-up of An's pensive face cuts to a flashback: the setting is now an idyllic countryside, with shots of children playing in the water, the mountains off in the distance. These flashbacks continue throughout the film, taking the viewer through his family's struggles as refugees as his mother looks for a safe place to sleep at night, or when he decides to take to stealing shoes and lumber to make sure his family has something to eat. These glimpses of the past provide a broader range of experiences for viewers to identify with and also mark out a temporal trajectory which is premised on the understanding that An's situation has improved.

The metacinematic moment arrives when the children of the center are gathered together to watch Liberty News. The scene stages the projectionist setting up the screening equipment and the children's faces as they wait in anticipation, and once the film begins to roll, the children are shown from behind, so that over the dark silhouettes of the spectating students, the audience can make out what it is playing on the screen [Figure 22]. This scene is both self-reflexive and recursive in that the educational film stages even more children sitting in class (this time in the film within the film). Such excessive recursivity may seem almost playful for the purpose of interpellation, but the perfect alignment of the frame within the frame intensifies the force of absorption, providing an enfolded sense of "deep space." Here, Akira Lippit's analysis of early cinema and its exploration of deep space is useful, particularly in how Lippit links it to construction of a psychic interiority.[62]

[62] Akira Lippit, *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 64.

Figure 22. "The Lighthouse on the Streets." The audience watches students in an education film watching another education film within the film (also featuring students looking forward). The gaps between the diegetic spaces (the frame within the frame) open an interpellative portal, naturalizing spectatorship as a ritual of subjectification.

For example, Lumière Brothers' *The Arrival of the Train at La Ciotat* (1895) depicted a train moving from the background into the foreground, eventually towards the screen, threatening to

burst through the surface between the film and the shocked spectator. Lippit reads the visuality of such spectacles psychoanalytically:

> The spectator is swallowed by the image, as if it were an oral cavity, as if the image, in this instant, revealed an interiority, vast and terrible. An interiority of cinema, a psychology entered like Irma through the mouth… The imagined or impending collision at the site of the screen between the train and the spectator can be figured as an ingestion: what awaits the spectator at the projected point of collision is an imaginary depth, a volume that opens onto the spectator from the other side of the screen. A gaping orifice.[63]

While there are no moving trains in "Lighthouse on the Streets," the metacinematic layers of the film function to open up a realm that lies behind the screen that separates the spectator from the film. Far from, "vast and terrible," however, what is on the other side of the "gaping orifice" of the educational film is none other than the utopic promise of communal bond, rehabilitation, and enlightenment.

Liberty Production film "Community Action" (*munjeŭi haedap* or "The Solution to the Problem" in Korean) is an example of an education film that mixes media to get its message across. Rather than a film-within-a-film approach, its recursivity hinged on a playful movement between cartoon animation and film footage [Figure 23]. The messages for conflict resolution were simple: 1) identify the problem; 2) select a leader; 3) do not rely on the government regarding individual affairs and resolve the conflict ourselves; 4) find agreement on how to resolve the problem; 5) cooperate with one another. Interestingly, the film begins with an animation of a man who puts up the title of the film. Shortly after, a live-action footage of a man dressed like the earlier cartoon character appears with rolls of poster signs and begin posting them on the wall. These posters then become "portals" into the animated realm in which the educational narrative unfolds. In the story, three characters try to determine how to move a heavy box that has fallen out of a truck and deliberate using these very principles. After the animated

[63] Ibid., 65.

portion ends, the film cuts to more live-action footage in which a man is walking by and contemplating the posters on the wall. Suddenly three men get into an argument and become frustrated. Eventually, they refer back to the poster signs and figure out how to resolve the issue, essentially repeating the same message. The recursive relationship between animation and live-action is useful in that it allows the film to clarify and reaffirm its main points. But perhaps more importantly, it sutures the whimsical, exaggerated world of animation with the more realistic live-action world in which people are encountering precisely these kinds of posters. In that sense, the film is pointing to the educational value of the poster signs themselves as a medium that will orient the community residents towards a more organized and peaceful *saenghwal*.

Figure 23. The strategy of recursivity. The technique produces humor, reiterates the message, and naturalizes the act of learning from educational media.

One of the major challenges for education films was to build convincing linkages between the problems and challenges it represented on screen and the world in which the viewers inhabited. The content of audio-visual media, in that sense, relied on intermedial reflexivity to

expand its network of associations and reference points across various sites of community life. Where media could not go, of course, local residents could do the job of spreading the message. As we see in "Delightful Farm Village Household" (discussed in the previous section), the un-enlightened mind is awakened not only through the leadership of the home extension agent, but when Myonggil's mother manages to win over the other village women, whose attitudes also contribute to changing the mind of Sooni's mother. This is also explicitly acknowledged in the Office of Public Information (OPI)'s production of four short films entitled, "Explaining and Demonstrating Ideas for Improvements in Korean Living." These one-reel, 16 mm Korean-language films, each ten minutes long with sound, were made to specifically target women, including a section called, "What Women are Talking About Today." The shooting location varied from Kangwŏn-do, Ch'ungchŏnnam-do, and Kyŏnggi-do. Henry L. Carr, the Chief of Audio-visual Division, explained how each film would contain,

> a special short sequence of scenes, or montage, showing women talking with each other. Some scenes should be in the city, some in the country, one or two women over a back fence, another of a group in a meeting. Over this sequence there should be a special track of women's voices, saying such things as, "I have been doing," "My family liked this when I tried it," "The baby has been in better health since," etc. The effect should be just a little humorous but not ridiculing the women who are seriously making real improvements in their family, living and talking about it with each other. [64]

The montage and voice-over sought to appropriate indigenous channels of gossip and rumor to direct it towards the objective of communal enlightenment. Just as Principal Kim managed to attract the attention of school parents by recording their voices, these educational films, through their social-scientific gaze, sought to model the ways in which information was shared to increase the chances of identification with and attraction to what was depicted on screen. The ambiguity regarding whether the montage is meant to be a reflection of already existing practices

[64] Request for Production of Training Aid (Home Economics Series), August 5, 1959 (926/279), National Archives of Korea.

or a call to replicate what is on-screen is, in this instance, productive. By assimilating the indigenous everyday practice of gossip into its own language of montage (thereby visualizing its synchronous communal temporality), the educational film would absorb the "original" practice of gossip into its intermedial network.

Shamans Before the Screen: Commercial Films in the Countryside

The chapter thus far has traced the ways in which audio-visual education and universalist postwar enlightenment discourse travelled hand-in-hand, with an emphasis on educational and community development efforts sponsored and led by UNESCO, USOM, and KORFEC. In recent years, we have seen a series of illuminating scholarship on the cultural and political role of U.S. propaganda organizations in South Korea in the early years of the Cold War.[65] What has been hinted at, though never explored in-depth, in these previous studies is the extent to which Korean educators and policymakers themselves regarded film as a medium as a necessary condition for integrating South Korean society into a modern *saenghwal*.[66] Articles in journals such as *New Education* (*Saegyoyuk*), *Ministry of Education Monthly* (*Mun'gyowŏlbo*),

[65] Hŏ Ŭn has written extensively on USIS Korea's role, agenda and organizational reach. See Hŏ Ŭn, "The Role in Cultural Diffusion Played by the United States Information Service Korea," *The Journal of Korean History* (*Han'guksahakbo*) 15, 9 (2003): 227-259; Hŏ Ŭn, "The Intervention of the United States in the Formation of the Nation State and the Frontline in Terms of the Establishment of Hegemony During the Cold War Era," *The Journal of Korean History* (*Han'guksahakbo*) 155, 12 (2011): 139-169; Hŏ Ŭn, "The Modernization Project of ROK and Interventions by the United States in the 1960s," *The Studies in Korean Literature (Han'gukmunhak'yŏn'gu*) 35, 12 (2008): 197-246. Kim Han Sang's work has explored the formation of South Korean film culture through the technical, material and organizational resources made available through American aid. See Han Sang Kim, "(Re)Presentations and Discourses in the USIS-Korea's Film Propaganda: The Rehabilitated Self in Rebuilding the Nation in the 1950s," *Sahoewayŏksa* 95, (2012): 243-278; Han Sang Kim, "The Mechanism of the Gaze in the USIS Film Propaganda in South Korea," *Yŏksa'munjeyŏnku* 30, (2013): 167-201; Han Sang Kim, "Cold War and the contested identity formation of Korean Filmmakers: on *Boxes of Death* and Kim Ki-yông's USIS films," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 14, no. 4 (2013): 551-563.

[66] Existing scholarship in the cultural history of the post-Korean War 1950s in South Korea tends to emphasize the critical perception of cinema as being overly Western, divorced from Korean everyday reality, and ultimately corrupting the sensibilities of the viewing public. These negative views were indeed forcefully voiced among writers and critics of the period. See Chapter 4 for my discussion of intellectual response to U.S. inflected film culture in postwar South Korea.

Educational Culture (*Kyoyungmunhwa*) show significant discursive continuities between how Korean educators and policymakers regarded cultural-educational films and commercial films. Yun T'aeyŏng. writing in *Educational Culture*, describes cinema as "the representative medium of modernity" whose power lies in its ability to "pursue truth, both about animate and inanimate things, across an entire range of human life."[67] Film appeals to the audience's "audio-visual senses" to facilitate understanding. Kim Ponggŏn in "Education and Film" details how changes in practice from shooting Hollywood movies in studio sets to on-location shooting has allowed viewers to "travel" to foreign locales like the Niagara Falls or the ancient ruins in Europe without the cost of plane tickets.[68] There was, in other words, a collapsing of distinctions both at the discursive and experiential level of different modes of films and the purposes they were supposed to serve. Film was educational, escapist, cultural, scientific, modern, mechanical *and* humanistic (and therefore natural) all at once. It would be impossible to control exactly how these valences would be experienced by individual viewers, but administrative documents, theoretical debates, manuals on film production, Fundamental Education Centers, and Korean educational journals reveal a serious sense of anxiety and preoccupation about achieving desired responses and reactions from viewers.

If we are to look at the constellation of these organizations as a kind of dispersed Ideological State Apparatus (ISA),[69] then recent scholarship on their filmic productions has

[67] Yun T'aeyŏng, *Kyoyungmunhwa*, October 1955, 72-77.
[68] Rather than describing Western films as being escapist fantasies that avoid the realities of Korean saenghwal, Kim points to the Italian neo-realist work Bicycle Thief, as capturing "the ordinary life of the public," by portraying "the warm-heartedness of everyday life—however impoverished—calmly, as is, without exaggeration." Kim also briefly traces the history of documentary films, including anthropological works on Eskimo and Maori tribes. Kim seems to be suggesting that Korean viewers appropriate this anthropological gaze when encountering Hollywood to watch the Western films for their ethnographic value—to learn the proper etiquette for men and women; for example, how to walk down the street together, when to remove your hat, how to greet one another at a café or a restaurant. See Kim Ponggôn, "Education and Film," *Kyoyungmunhwa*, January1956, 30-37.
[69] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 142-148.

tended to focus on the production-side. In this section of the chapter, I shift the focus to reception: namely, how Western cultural productions were encountered by audience members in open-air theaters in the countryside in the post-Korean War 1950s. Two kinds of figures receive special attention in my study. One is *pyŏnsa* (*benshi* in Japanese) whose performances involved, though were not limited to, narrating silent foreign films to the audience [Figure 24].[70]

Figure 24. Illustration of a pyŏnsa (movie narrator) performance in an outdoor theater
Source: *Tonga Ilbo,* August 15, 1958.

The other is the mobile film projectionist (*yidongyŏngsa*), who travelled from one town to another screening films in makeshift or temporary theaters. In the southwest province of Chŏlla, outdoor film screenings were widely referred to as "*kut*," which is traditionally understood as a ritual offering to gods and ancestors performed by a Korean shaman (*mu*). The mobile projectionists, by association, were called—and frequently to their chagrin—"*kut*-mongers" *(kutchaengi*).[71] Both the *pyŏnsa* and the mobile projectionist served as "mediums" in the regional

[70] Cho Hee-Moon, "Reflection from the Silent Film Era- Byunsa, the Narrator," in *FIAF 58th Congress Seoul 2002: Asian Cinema—Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, (Seoul: Korean Film Archive, 2002), 161-177.
[71] This section draws from on oral interviews with former mobile film projectionists and other figures who were closely involved with film entertainment in the Chŏlla Provinces. Their statements were products of a set of meticulous and rich interviews conducted by Wi Kyŏnghye, which were published through National Institute of Korean History. For Wi's secondary work on the subject of mobile film projectionist as "*kutchaengi*," see Wi

film culture, as a necessary supplement to translate the imported Western culture to render it legible to Korean viewers. Yet their roles far exceeded the simple task of transmission. The *pyŏnsa* performance often culturally recoded the film content so that their meanings and the feelings they evoked in the audience were localized through the mediation process. Since the *pyŏnsa* performance invited audible and visible affective participation on a mass scale, it was a self-legitimizing democratic mode of performer-spectator reciprocity that subverted the unilateral model of consumption via absorption into the screen. Similarly, the mobile projectionist was involved in more than creating a space of film consumption: open-air theatres functioned as both indigenous and foreign spaces at once. Contrary to the frequently-spouted criticism by intellectuals that commercial cinema was divorced from genuine Korean *saenghwal*, we see that open-air theaters created a space of social mingling and courtship in which the line between escapist fantasy and rural everyday life was blurred.

My analysis of open-air cinema reworks Walter Benjamin's formulation of the "aura" and the relationship between art and ritual. In the second-version of his famed essay, "Work of Art in the Epoch of Technical Reproducibility," Benjamin discusses how the film actor, in contrast to the theatre actor, must navigate the realities of film production in which he has no control over the totality off his performance, which will be chopped up, scrambled and manipulated in the assembly-line logic of "test performances." By design, this logic produces fields of visibility (what reaches the eyes of the public) and invisibility (what does not, so to speak, "make the cut"). Ironically, what becomes visible to the masses becomes a moment of triumph in the human-apparatus encounter. "For the majority of city dwellers, throughout the workday in offices and factories, have to relinquish their humanity in the face of an apparatus,"

Kyŏnghye, "Itinerant Film Exhibition Practices in 1950s South Korea: In-betweenness of the pre-modern entertainment and visual modernity," *Chibangsawa Chibangmunhwa* 15, no. 2 (2012): 197-228.

he writes. "In the evening these same masses fill the cinemas, to witness the film actor taking revenge on their behalf not only by asserting his humanity (or what appears to them as such) against the apparatus."[72] But what happens when the audience consists of non-city dwellers? Even if the audience is familiar with the dehumanizing effects of industrial modernity, what happens when there exists other barriers (stemming from difference in nation, language and culture) to achieving the kind of identification needed for a film actor to take "revenge on [the audience's] behalf"? These questions would have been eminently applicable to the open-air cinema of the South Korean countryside. To address these questions, I position *pyŏnsa*, i.e. the movie narrator, rather than the film actor, as holding the privileged position of agency vis-à-vis the apparatus when discussing the culture of rural film spectatorship. In this case, the apparatus was not the apparatus of production (the camera, the arc lamps, microphone, etc.) but the apparatus of distribution and reception (the projector and the screen).

The *pyŏnsa*'s triumphant return in the post-liberation and post-Korean War period after years of intellectual ridicule (by Korean literary and film critics) and censorship (by the Japanese colonial government)[73] also could be understood as a kind of "revenge," if not against the apparatus—since his performative role is inextricably linked to it—then against different forms of enlightenment and mobilization logics which relied on the cinematic medium's dream of interpellative totality. In such a dream, the mechanism of successful film production extends to seamlessly incorporate the audience and its reception, thereby eliminating the troubling and uncertain gap between the viewer and the screen. This is never explicitly stated by Benjamin, but

[72] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Reproducibility*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 31.

[73] In 1922, "Entertainment and Entertainment Venue Regulation" was enacted by the Japanese colonial authority to regulate *pyŏnsa* performances. See Cho Junhyŏng, "Chosun Film Scene since the Mid-1930s: Generation Shift-Incorporation-System of Control," trans. Hae-young Cho and Eung-joo Cho, in *The Time of Change and Choice: Discovery of Films from Japanese Colonial Period*, ed. Young-jung Cho, et al, vol. 11 (Pusan International Film Festival, 2006), 68-81.

hinted in his discussion about the "intervention in a performance by a body of experts" in the process of production which consists of "daily generat[ed] countless mechanized tests" and how the actor confronts an apparatus which stands for the invisible masses. In both the former (the macro-level of production) and the latter (the micro-level of performance), what is envisioned is "the cult of the audience" through which "fascism is seeking to supplant the class consciousness of the masses."[74]

As stated above, the role of *pyŏnsa* far exceeded simply translating and explaining what was happening on screen.[75] The explication could, at times, be as straightforward as reading and elaborating on the subtitles in the film which were not very useful owing to the high illiteracy rate of the people in the countryside; most performances however involved taking command of the film narrative with his own oral storytelling, vocal mimicry, and plaintive cries. When they were performing English-language films, they often could not read or understand English and interpreted only the general gist of the scene to their own liking. What's more, in many cases, the audience was often aware of this situation and actually delighted in the ingenuity and improvisational agility of the *pyŏnsa*. Mistakes and stylized self-corrections were welcomed with laughter. Those who were illiterate or had received little formal education tended to prefer *pyŏnsa*-led performances to the sound films, so that organizers would often turn off the sound to talkies to give *pyŏnsa*s more opportunities to perform, since this increased their ticket revenue. In many instances, *pyŏnsa* interpreted the film to suit his own performance sensibilities and convenience. According to at least one oral history, Ma Chŏngpong, who is one of the most

[74] Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 33.
[75] According to Sŏ Agui, some educated people without any experience of being a *pyŏnsa* specialized in simply reading the scripts. They were only brought in for foreign film screenings. See Wi Kyŏnghae (Interviewer) & Sŏ Agui (Interviewee) (2009). [Interview transcript] *After the Korean War: Testimonies of Activities of 1960s Mobile Film Projectionist, Collection of Sources: Focusing on North and South Chŏlla Provinces, Oral Statement - Sŏ Agui* Retrieved from National Institute of Korean History's Electronic Library Web site: http://library.history.go.kr/index.ax

celebrated *pyŏnsa*s in Korea, is said to have re-cut the films himself using acetone-based film cement prior to some of his performances.[76] In other words, it would be a mistake to claim that the *pyŏnsa* was merely supplementing or enriching one's experience of films whose "content" arrived in finished form; on the contrary, he functioned, and was regarded by those who attended his performances, as something of a maestro.

The following is Pak Chongmin's recollection of *pyŏnsa* Ch'oe Bong's preparation for his performance.

> The thing is, he didn't even know English. He'd just feel out the movie and the story would just pop up in his head. You had info like where the guy was from, his name, what year, it's before the Cold War, something like that. It's Texas or some such place, and that's what he'd jot down. And if the character's walking somewhere. He can just say, he's walking there!... And he'd really dress it up so it sounded real good. He had a knack for that kind of thing. Even with Korean movies, in most cases, we'd kill the sound and tell him to explain everything. Then so many more people would be crying and laughing. They'd just start weeping, when that bastard went all tragic.[77]

Based on this account, one might argue that the *pyŏnsa* embodied the insurmountable gap between the screen and the viewer. The gap was both linguistic and cultural. There was no promise of intentional fidelity between the film content and the movieteller's enunciations. The mysterious randomness of the process ("the story would just pop up in his head") was partly the source of the *pyŏnsa*'s aura. What was more important than the connection between the contents of the screen and the movieteller was the connection between the movieteller and the audience. Numerous oral reminiscences of *pyŏnsa* performances refer to the direct transmission of affect ("crying," "laughing." "weeping")—the cause-effect mirroring of the emotions of the performer and the audience are reported with a nostalgic fondness, with a glimmering sense of residual awe,

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[76] Ibid., 38.
[77] Wi Kyŏnghae (Interviewer) & Pak Chongmin (Interviewee) (2009). [Interview transcript] *After the Korean War: Testimonies of Activities of 1960s Mobile Film Projectionist, Collection of Sources: Focuing on North and South Chŏlla Provinces, Oral Statement – Pak Chongmin* Retrieved from National Institute of Korean History's Electronic Library Web site: http://library.history.go.kr/index.ax

but also with a sense that it was a common phenomenon—nothing really to be surprised about. [78] Of course, our consideration of how *pyŏnsa* performances were encountered in the countryside should also take into account how uneven the experience must have been for the audience members. For those old enough to remember an era when silent films dominated colonial Chosŏn, *pyŏnsa*-performances were events of early-colonial period nostalgia. For those who had only watched sound films of the late-colonial period, silent films were actually a throwback to an era they did not know. For some—even the very old—it was their first direct participation in film spectatorship.

Recollections of how audience members experienced the open-air cinema as a social space (rather than a space of spectatorship) also deserve attention. According to Pak, the outdoor theaters attracted people of all ages and backgrounds who would come to "watch the *kut*." Sŏ Yangsu makes a distinction between theater-goers in Pusan and those going to a temporary (i.e. open-air) theater: the former was attended by intellectuals and those who harbored a sustained interest in the movies and made a conscious decision to attend a specific film based on what he or she had heard, whereas the latter was attended by those without any awareness of what the movie would be about.[79] The evening screenings would begin around eight-thirty or nine so that people in nearby towns would have enough time to get to the screening site. The atmosphere was that of a village banquet. Groups of young men and women would meet for the first time and

[78] In Sŏ Yangsu's account of attending theaters in the mid-1950s as a child, "Country people, they're simple hearted… They're like children. If *pyŏnsa* would cry and laugh…they'd just follow along." See Wi Kyŏnghae (Interviewer) & Sŏ Yangsu (Interviewee) (2009). [Interview transcript] *After the Korean War: Testimonies of Activities of 1960s Mobile Film Projectionist, Collection of Sources: Focuing on North and South Jôlla Provinces, Oral Statement - Sŏ Yangsu* Retrieved from National Institute of Korean History's Electronic Library Web site: http://library.history.go.kr/index.ax

[79] Ibid., 32.

flirt. Some would pair off and disappear into a barley field during or after the screening.[80] Even those without ticket money would show up and loiter outside. The mobile projectionists discuss the importance of sectioning off the screening space to keep the non-paying people out and personnel would have to be stationed around the tent to make sure nobody snuck in below it or cut their way inside with a knife. "There was nothing to do before around here," Pak says, "No TV back then. The only thing the young people had to look forward to was the screening."[81] In Sŏ's account of attending movie theaters in the mid-1950, if there was a kissing scene and you were still in middle-school or in high-school, you were supposed to avert your eyes. "We'd think, 'we cannot watch such things,'" he says. "If you watched you were one in a hundred, a special kid." These accounts speak to a complex set of desires and fears, a sense of thrill, anticipation and even danger that circulated around these screenings.[82] We see a powerful longing to experience the never-before-seen, which was not only limited to the realm of fantasy but also implicated with actual acts of romantic courtship and sexuality.[83] We also see an internalized set of prohibitions that are triggered and obeyed during the screening even under the cloak of anonymity.

Older viewers watching films for the first time would sometimes touch the screen fabric and say, "People are coming out of it!" Then they would stand by the machine during the

[80] Owners of barley fields reportedly complained about the outdoor screenings because of many instances when their crops were ruined by young lovers who had rolled around in the field. See interview transcript Wi Kyŏnghae (Interviewer) & Pak Chongmin (Interviewee), 75-76.
[81] See Wi Kyŏnghye (Interviewer) & Pak Hyŏnghun (Interviewee) (2009). [Interview transcript] *After the Korean War: Testimonies of Activities of 1960s Mobile Film Projectionist, Collection of Sources: North and South Chŏlla Provinces, Oral Statement - Pak Hyŏnghun* Retrieved from National Institute of Korean History's Electronic Library Web site: http://library.history.go.kr/index.ax, 12.
[82] Pak Hyŏnghun adds to the barley field story by saying that in the wee-hours you would hear some women crying for help. See Ibid., 49.
[83] Pak Chongmin: "They'd come to watch the *kut*. The young folks would meet there. They'd get involved romantically and they'd get married." See Wi Kyŏnghae (Interviewer) & Pak Chongmin (Interviewee), 76.

screening and size it up from the side. In a rural screening of *Quo Vadis*[84], a particularly interesting episode captures the audience's encounter with three-dimensional fictional space. Yi Suni, who was a projectionist at the time, recounts a scene in which Emperor Nero begins to slaughter all the Christians. "But this old lady," Yi says, "thinking it was a real person, she just couldn't deal with Nero—she was a churchgoing lady, you see—she whipped out a sickle and slashed it across the screen. So we had to patch up the cloth screen and resumed the movie. The old lady kept watching, but now the church elder was sitting next to her."[85] The tale is certainly amusing but the social significance of her act cannot be explained simply by assuming she believed naively that Nero was "a real person." Rather, it seems more probable that she was operating within a different symbolic/ritualistic paradigm than what is commonly codified to be appropriate behavior for cinema spectatorship, even for a rural open-air theater. Perhaps at some level there was deliberateness, if not actual social calculation, involved in her "outburst" which may have confirmed her faith in the eyes of the non-believers and even augmented her status among the other believers who were in attendance. (At the very least, it appears to have won the approval of the church elder.)

Such moments of rural spectatorship challenge two widely-held (and partly contradictory) attitudes about the role of U.S. films in South Korean popular culture during the postwar 1950s. The first was that a cautionary and moralizing position taken by those who feared that the Korean way of life was being corrupted by depictions of Western *saenghwal*. The second was the technophilic position taken by those who believed in the beneficial properties unique to the film apparatus and perceived the propagation of cinema to be a necessary element to building

[84] *Quo Vadis,* an American epic film released in 1951 about the tyrannical rule of the Roman emperor Nero and his persecution of Christians, arrived in South Korea in 1955. The film and its literary appropriation is also discussed in Chapter 5.
[85] Wi Kyŏnghye, *The History of Theatre Culture in Honam: Locality of Film Reception* (Sŏul, Taholmidiŏ, 2007), 90-91.

an enlightened, modern society. For those who took the second position—including Korean policymakers and educators as well as American propagandists—the deployment of audio-visual media was an opportunity to interpellate the viewer into a utopic spatio-temporality unfolding on-screen (as discussed in the previous section with reference to meta-cinematic educational films). By emphasizing the social, participatory, and oral/aural dimensions of these moments, I have shown that the consumption of Western cinema was far from being top-down and passive; "consumption" entailed syncretic productions of social, erotic, and spiritual energies that were tied to local and indigenous forms of life.

Rethinking the Audio-Visual: Philosophical Reflections on Sight and Sound

In the final section, I discuss two striking philosophical essays on the differing significances of sight and sound. In the first essay, An Pyŏngmu (1922-1996) reflects on the differences between "the mountains" and "the streets," showing how the city and the countryside can differently affect one's relationship to one's senses and the spatio-temporal.[86] In the second, philosopher Pak Chonghong (1903-1976) traces the genecology of "hearing" and "seeing" in a range of religious, literary, and philosophical texts across what he loosely formulates as Eastern and Western thought. Both argue for the potentiality of an epistemology and an ontology that exist beyond the offerings of contemporary modern civilization, driven towards urbanization, mechanization, and rationalization. For An, it is the countryside that offers existential refuge, while for Pak, he believes that a balance of Eastern and Western intellectual legacies will provide the best path for the future.

[86] An's essay, while brief, is particularly interesting in light of his future career. In the 1960s, he would go on to study theology in University of Heidelberg and in the 1970s become one of the founders of Minjung Theology.

In "The Mountains and the Streets," An describes how even the most trivial experience in the woods can take on rich impenetrability of meaning: for example, a gust of wind through pine trees can be heard sometimes as a "cautious exhaling of breath" or "the roaring grandeur of a thousand soldiers and ten thousand horses."[87] He then relates this experience to a detailed catalogue of what one hears in the city—a jumble of "machines, cars and trolleys, radios, gramophones, loudspeakers, people's laughter and tears and fighting *in the streets*" (emphasis added)—arguing that, in stark contrast to this cacophony, what is heard in the woods is "some original (*pollae,* 本來) sound." For An, "the streets" functions as a kind of supermedium that has incorporated smaller noise-machines into a terrible cacophony that disorients the soul. This explains why people's "laughter and tears and fighting" are listed alongside the sounds of machines. These human noises have become disembodied and dispossessed from their original owners and become transmission signals in a medium ("the streets"). For An, this urban alienation is a form of metaphysical impoverishment, a separation from a deeper epistemological realm. "Urban *saenghwal*," he writes, "is a *saenghwal* without being able to hear true (*ch'am*) sounds."

An goes on to clarify that the problem is not only that the city is too loud or that it has too many different kinds of sounds, but that each sound interferes with the other; "You cannot hear a single sound truly as itself," he claims. "It is mixed with too many reverberations so that the eardrum cannot receive it properly." By contrast, "in the mountains, sound exists as it is and vibrates the eardrum in its proper form (*moyang*)." He writes of hearing a bird singing from a near distance and writes that this brings about a "certain ecstasy" and "connects you to the breaths of some original totality (*ponch'e*)." While both urban and rural experiences, in a sense dislocates the listener, the urban soundscape alienates the listener by obfuscating the sounds that

[87] An Pyŏngmu, "The Mountains and the Streets" *Nongmin Saenghwal,* 73-74

can offer some form of "true" contact while the rural environment provides that opportunity.[88] It is not just a matter of difference between dearth and abundance of sensorial information.

The potential for sensorial (specifically audio-visual) reorientation in the countryside is both ontological and aesthetic. An writes, "Look at the bird flying in the sky!" "Look at the lilies in the fields" and then invites the reader to regard what is a rather mundane sight in the countryside with a greater mystery and curiosity. "What is this [i.e. the bird in flight, lilies in the fields] saying," he writes, "and what is it trying to show?" Here, I take An to mean not that the bird is trying to "say" or "show" something but that there is some hidden intentionality behind *the image* of the "bird flying in the sky" to which we must devote our hermeneutic attention. This is an attempt to mystify and sacralize—to install a gap between—the apparent transparency of the rural environment and the observer. When An writes that "the hearts of those who ask true questions belong in the mountains and the fields" he is calling for a radical recalibration of our sensorial environment—what I understand to be a contestation of technophilic tendencies of the dominant pedagogic program of the era under the banner of "audio-visual education." In An's discussion, the potential educational and cultural benefits of technologically mediated sounds (made possible by radio and the gramophone) are elided and what is emphasized, instead, is the noise, the reverberation, and corruption of sound in its "true" form.

Pak Chonghong, in "Seeing and Hearing"[89] traces the significance of each faculty and its relationship to past civilizational discourses, after situating these functions within the contemporary context:

> It's true that all of our knowledge cannot be detached from the sensation that enters through the five senses. This is particularly true for seeing and hearing. This is why, these

[88] "If you focus your mind," he writes towards the conclusion, "you can hear the sound of eternity…and breathe the scented winds of twilight." Moreover, these reflections cause An to "forget that [he] was in the darkening woods" and he loses "his sense of time passing."
[89] Pak Chonghong, "Pondanŭn kŏtkwa tŭnŭndanŭn kŏt" [seeing and hearing], October 1959, *Saebyŏk*, 82-87.

> days, the so-called "audio-visual education" has become a hot subject, but this hardly comes as a surprise. Even the realm of the spiritual, which appears to be of a different character from that which is sensed, is intimately linked to seeing and hearing.[90]

At first, Pak seems to link the faculty of "seeing" with the West and the faculty of "hearing" with the East. With the everyday English expression, "Do you see?" he traces the centrality of sight's association with understanding and apprehension back to the Greek philosophers (Plato, Aristotle) and then moves on to the Italian Renaissance, and finally to the visual sophistication of French culture. After conceding that "seeing" has "given birth to art and philosophy," and brought "splendor to human culture," he wonders, "Is hearing never as good as seeing?"[91]

The manner in which Pak tackles his own question in the following section deserves attention. He moves from a discursive to a narrative register, remarking on the evening breeze of fall, and how the chirping of the crickets seem to announce the season's change. This sparks a memory of taffy peddlers and *yakbap*[92] vendors, which leads to a memory of comfort food (*kimchi, t'ojangguk*), conjuring, then, the memory of scents which, while not necessarily fragrant, have powerful emotional connections (such as the smell associated with the clammy embrace of one's mother). This apparent digression finally leads to the significance of "speech" (*mal*) in our lives. ("We listen to the words of our elders."[93]) It is here that Pak deepens the reader's understanding of "hearing." To hear/to listen (*tŭnnunda*)[94] is not simply to take in sound, but to understand.

> Moreover, hearing/listening goes a step beyond understanding to signify putting something into practice… "Not listening to someone"…means that [someone's words] are not being put into practice… According to words of Jehovah—in Hebrew, that is—*taabarŭ* (*dåbår*), in other words, *speech*, is not limited to *sound* as indicated by *kol* (gol),

[90] Ibid., 82.
[91] Ibid., 84.
[92] Flavored glutinous rice mixed with dates, chestnut, honey, etc.
[93] Ibid., 85.
[94] The Korean *tŭnnŭnda* captures the semantic range of both "to hear" and "to listen" in English. Accordingly, the slippage from "hearing" to "listening" in the subsequent passage is intentional.

> but means bringing what is in the background to the foreground, it is a dynamic term, that which indicates action… In the library scene of Part 1, Chapter 3 in *Faust*, the translation of Gospel of John's first chapter as "In the beginning was *logos* (speech)" exemplifies Goethe's seriousness towards scholarship, not to mention his penchant for pregnant statements. Therefore, *taabarŭ* and *logosŭ*, in other words, *speech*, is that which is true, that which is certain, that which deserves total faith, and such conviction is expressed through none other than *Amen*. To listen (*Hören*) means that I will put into practice, that I will obey, and that I belong/am subjectified (*Gehören*).[95]

I have quoted here at length to display the citational density of this section. It is indeed intriguing that while beginning with an embodied representation of auditory sensation (crickets), and moving through memories of smell and touch (the embrace of one's mother), Pak has arrived at the Hebrew Bible and German literature. The references do not end there; he goes on to link Western existentialism's attempt to return to an authentic self (*pollaejŏk na*) from a decadent self with Confucius's teachings that encourage "sincerity" (*sŏng*, 試) towards oneself. In the same vein, he links *logos* ("the word/speech," which Pak translates as *mal*) with "the way" (*to,* 道)—claiming that "listening to the way" may be translated or understood as "listening to *logos*." As suggested above, "to listen" in this context means not only to hear with the ear, but also to put to practice (*shirhaeng*, 實行) through the body and the heart, to do as is spoken.[96]

Despite the diversity of philosophical reference points found in Pak's genealogy of what it means to hear and listen, he eventually settles on two civilizational traditions. "If Greece is the West, then Israel is undoubtedly the East. Western scholarship has sought to build on that which can be clearly and definitively ascertained, while Eastern thought has sought to find depth in that which is mystical. The eye's strength appears to lie in extending outward while the ear excels in pulling things inward."[97] In Pak's analysis, there is no reference to a timeless national identity, but a broader genealogical web of "Eastern thought," within which his own reflections take place.

[95] Ibid., 85.
[96] Ibid., 85.
[97] Ibid., 86.

Even then, the network of references include the Hebrew Bible, *Faust,* Heidegger, existentialism, and Confucius. Even more striking is the fact that contrary to Margaret Mead's insistence on a "double hierarchy" that will require eventual dissolution and re-configuration, Pak's intertextual hermeneutics of "seeing" and "hearing" engages in analyses that draw from multiple cultural legacies without privileging one or the other based on national, racial, or civilizational grounds.

Pak ultimately recommends neither "seeing" nor "hearing" as the preferred mode of sensorial, intellectual, and spiritual engagement with the world, but calls for considered and judicious attention to both faculties. To this end, he employs the metaphor of a top that spins most vigorously when both centrifugal and centripetal forces are equally strong; in this metaphor, "seeing" strengthens the outward power (centrifugal), while "hearing" strengthens the movement towards the interior (centripetal). Pak's position, in this regard, is reminiscent of the one taken by literary critic Paek Ch'ŏl in "What Comes After Naturalism" (discussed in the beginning of Chapter 2),[98] in which he argued for a unifying subjectivity that could synthesize externally-oriented naturalism and internally-oriented existentialism, while assimilating the technological resources of available media for a new literature. Pak and Paek's positions were hardly idiosyncratic and predicated on a shared sense of crisis about the modern civilization's brutalizing effect on human *saenghwal*. As Pak writes,

> The culture of modernity develops through differentiation and specialization… A machine only for seeing, a machine only for listening. This ensures that the machines can fulfill their mission as machines. Jobs of human beings also turn to division of labor, as does scholarship and research… As civilization advances, there is a demand for further specialization. But does this mean that man (s*aram*), a person's human way-of-life (*in'gan saenghwal*) must be specialized too? A *saenghwal* only for seeing, a *saenghwal* only for listening. If such a *saenghwal* were to exist, it would be a handicapped *saenghwal*, a *saenghwal* racked with misfortune.[99]

[98] Paek Ch'ŏl, "What Comes After Naturalism" *Munhak Yesul*, January 1956, 121-122.
[99] Ibid., 87.

While Pak's understanding of the future of audio-visual machines does not accord with the reality of how programs such as FE envisioned them (indeed, far from separating "seeing" from "hearing," UNESCO's ideal was to coordinate multiple sensorial conditioning towards a utopic future of mass enlightenment and rural development), what comes through clearly in the quote is Pak's desire to preserve a holistic vision of human *saenghwal* that is not reducible to the logic of mechanization, technocratic functionality, maximized production and specialization. Pak's rhetorical technique in the essay, moreover, of enfolding the dense web of intertextual reference points (drawing from a heterogeneous cast of writers, intellectuals, and philosophers) within a personally embodied spatio-temporally situated experience (that of Pak's thoughts being stirred by the cool autumn breeze in the evening) endows his intellectual inquiry with concreteness, situated authenticity. It is presented not simply as alienated, abstracted intellectual discourse, but as an unfolding chain of ideas that inhabit and are re-generated from Pak's own concrete, sensorially and spiritually alert existence, woven from textures of touch, sound, smell, and yearning.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that FE's attempt to employ audio-visual technology to bring about mass enlightenment and rural development in South Korea suffered from inherent ideological contradictions and faced recalcitrant local discourses, forms of life, and modes of visuality and spectatorship. Director Choi Sung Jun's "diary" in which he sought to understand the spiritual foundation of Western civilization ran counter to the rationalist, materialist, positivist ethos of FE. My discussion of female rural leaders in the women's monthly *Yŏwŏn* and education films underscored the ways in which the discourse of community development project

engendered new subjectivities, at once mobilizing womanhood in ways that existing scholarship on the postwar gender representations have largely neglected and centering the countryside as the moral core of the developing nation. My analysis of the culture of open-air cinema has shown how tendency towards domestication, secularization, and absorption embodied in the ideals of audio-visual enlightenment were thwarted by the local, indigenous revival of *pyŏnsa* and the projectionist. In the final section, I discussed examples of how South Korean intellectual discourse deflected the universalist, hierarchical, and homogenizing logic of modernization and development, especially through philosophical reflections on human sensorial and technical intermediations and their relationship to knowledge, spirituality, action, and modes of existence.

I want to conclude the chapter with a discussion of Kim Kongch'ŏn's "*Saengwhal* and Ideology of the Countryside will Save the Modern World," which, like many of the South Korean cultural productions considered thus far, privileged rural *saenghwal* over its urban counterpart. [100] Kim's article is remarkable for several reasons. First, it openly critiques the rural enlightenment program as being insufficient and hypocritical. Second, it lays out an argument for how a sustained investigation into and faithful fulfillment of rural *saenghwal* can redeem the confusion caused by modern civilization. Third, it does this by appealing to foundations of liberalism and equality—picturing the farmer as independent, peace-loving and respectful of other people's properties. Fourth, it stakes out a *saenghwal*-determinist position that sees rice production as the essential defining feature of the Korean people. Fifth, while hardly alone in its criticism of administrative incompetence by the South Korean government and U.S.-aid policies, it reserves its harshest moral condemnation for the ideology of imperialism and capitalism and explicitly links the history of both to Europe and the United States.

[100] Kim Kongch'ŏn, "*Saengwhal* and Ideology of the Countryside will Save the Modern World." *Food and Agriculture*, August 1959, 50-59.

Kim's main claim is radical and to be understood within the context of postwar national reconstruction. He suggests that all of South Korea's problems—"politics, economics, academic culture, religion"—including the problem of human *saenghwal* should entail an examination of farm village *saenghwal*'s structures and principles to "begin all over again." The problem of rural enlightenment leaders, intellectuals, novelists[101] and politicians who want to "solve" the "problem of the countryside" is that they have been indoctrinated by the ideology of urban *saenghwal*.[102] Even as they claim to want to help the people in the countryside, they regard the conditions of the countryside as unlivable and inhuman. The adjectives "uneducated" (*muji*), "impoverished" (*pin'gon*), and "backwards" (*hujin*) are repeatedly attached to the state of the countryside. These attitudes have been internalized from the outside. Kim believes that "servility" and "obsequiousness" to the gaze of the outside world brings "retrogression to our [national] vitality (*saengmyŏng*)."

Kim's theory of *saenghwal* was also a direct attack against the developmentalist logic of modernization and the global "standard of living" discourse which sought to regulate, standardize and assimilate diverse forms of life. "The problem of humanity and society lies with the notion," Kim writes, "that a society or a group of human beings are advanced based on their standard of living or how advanced or backwards are in terms of their civilizational stage." This fallacy comes from forgetting the "great premise" that "what is most indispensable in human society is ethics." Perhaps what is the most surprising about Kim's argument is how he defines this universal category: "Living without intruding on or ruling over the life (*saengmyŏng*) and

[101] Kim is particularly harsh when commenting on the hypocrisy of intellectuals: "In their novels and essays and theses, [the literary figures and the cultural elite] discuss the absurdity and confusion of modern life, showing pity, sympathy and compassion for the life in the countryside, but their own *saenghwal* cannot even be imagined from the context of farmers in the countryside."

[102] This is an inevitable result of a principle he reiterates throughout the article, which is that *saenghwal* determines ideology (*sasang*).

saenghwal of another" and "living the proper *saenghwal* of a human being." While liberalism is never mentioned by name, concepts of freedom and private property are employed repeatedly to discuss the ideal society of farmers laboring over their own land while living in peace. Yet he draws the line at corporate capitalism, which he sees to be exploitative. At a key moment of the argument Kim draws from French philosopher "Alain"[103] to argue that the desire to accumulate capital "robbed human beings of their *saenghwal.* For a long time, human beings lived without automobiles and record players, but human beings could never survive without bread or poultry or family businesses." Kim's intellectual move is to universalize the South Korean countryside which is in the process of being incorporated into a global capitalist-developmentalist logic (by being visualized as a zone to be rescued) so that he can launch a sweeping critique against the normative ideology of enlightenment, modernization, and Westernization. In doing so, Kim appears to have adopted one of the fundamental aspects of American doctrine of democracy and capitalism—that is egalitarianism and private property—and reworked them to depict a rural-centric vision of society of yeoman-like farmers championed by political philosophers like Thomas Jefferson. Within this formulation, exploitative capitalism and imperialism function as the most illiberal force of "evil" in that they "intrude on or rule over the *saengmyŏng* and *saenghwal* of another."

Near the conclusion, Kim refers to a *Han'guk Ilbo* article published in the New Year-issue of 1958, called "This is South Korea 100 Years in the Future," which featured a combination of illustrations and articles showing what a futuristic Korean society might look like [Figure 25].[104]

[103] Also known as Emile-Auguste Chartier.
[104] In his commentary, Kim conflates two separate pieces that appeared in the same issue of *Han'guk Ilbo*. One is a full-page spread of a series of comic illustrations on "On the Eve of New Years Day, 2000 A.D" by eight cartoonists, showcasing various technological advancements and absurd, uncomfortable situations that arise from

Figure 25. Visions of the future. From the cartoon "On the First Day of Year 2200 A.D." (left) and the article "The Cradle of the Spiritual Revolution" (right)
Source: *Han'guk Ilbo,* January 1, 1958

While Kim admits to have enjoyed reading the lighthearted piece (subtitles include: "A Fantasy (*mongsang*) That Isn't a Fantasy," "The Birthplace of Revolution of the Soul, "Come-and-Go in a High-speed Jet Automobile," "Rice is Produced at the Factory"), he wonders if human beings are liberated from "work" how they would spend their time? He also wonders whether "a revolution of the soul" might be necessary a hundred years from then and what form this would take. Though Kim does not delve into the article's content in great detail, it is worth considering for its earnestness. Future milestones of modern Korean history occur in the following order. First is that a "World Federation Governing Body" has unified Korea democratically and has produced great advancements in science. After a scientific revolution which ensures that problem of food shortage has been completely resolved, there is a "religious revolution" producing a "new type of human being." This religious revolution entails the unification of all religions

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them. The second is the essay written "100 years in the future." The distinction is important for they express differing attitudes about technological progress. The former is much more whimsical, focuses on excess, folly, haplessness, foibles. The sense is that the same silly characters that populate today's comics now live in the future. The latter, while just as fantastic in its premise (it begins with an interview with a Martian), is much more earnest and hopeful in its projections and conveys a sense that the moral character of humanity as a whole has advanced along with technology. See *Han'guk Ilbo,* January 1, 1958.

around a fundamental truth, which is discovered. The mystery of this truth is also explained in scientific terms as well. When Korea brings about a religious revolution, it begins to attract foreign students of religion from all over the world, "just as students of science flock to advanced nations of today." While it is perhaps not surprising that this hypothetical fantasy piece would place Korea on the vanguard of history, but *how* it charts that future is revealing. Technological revolution alone does not complete civilizational development. What must occur is a unification of beliefs and these beliefs also with scientific epistemology. The final revolution, which is of the soul, occurs in time for an encounter with an extraterrestrial. It is perhaps no coincidence that Kim's question about the soul immediately follows his inquiry into the nature of work. Indeed, he concludes the article by reminding the reader that "the spirit of the arts exist in conversation with the spirit and structure of our agricultural *saenghwal*." According to Kim, the soul cannot find artistic expression once the spirit of *saenghwal* (which is grounded in labor—namely, the production of rice) is "robbed of its vitality by over-mechanization." For Kim, there can be no concept of the soul that is divested of its relationship to the labor of production.

If, as seen in the beginning of this chapter, Ch'ŏlju in Han Hŭkgu's *Looking Down at the Village* demonstrated a spirited enthusiasm towards rural development upon encountering images of modern American farms, Kim Kongch'ŏn was already looking beyond the implications of an industrialized farm to consider the effects of totally mechanized *saenghwal* on the soul of humankind. While thinkers like Kim, as well as the others I have considered in this chapter, allow us to appreciate so much that could not be contained by the totalizing discourse of postwar audio-visual enlightenment (such as Korean intellectual engagement with spirituality, religiosity, civilizational genealogy, and experiential modality of urban and rural spaces), we have so far neglected a key conceptual domain that often accompanied the discourse of *saenghwal* during

this period—that is, the realm of "everyday feelings" *(saenghwal kamjŏng*). The next chapter explores this subject within the context of postwar South Korean cinema.

CHAPTER 4

The Battle Over "Everyday Feelings": Gendered Negotiation Between *Sinp'a*, Melodrama, and Realism

> "Conventions—the means of expression which find tacit consent—are a vital part of this structure of feeling. As the structure changes, new means are perceived and realized, while old means come to appear empty and artificial."
>
> —Raymond Williams from *Preface to Film* (1954)[1]

> "It's possible that we are not 'dramatic' (*tyuramat'ik*). It's true for the most part that the everyday feelings (*saenghwal kamjŏng*) of Easterners, compared to that of Westerners, are not as 'dramatic.' …does this mean that Koreans are not as 'dramatic' as the Japanese or the Chinese?"
>
> —Yu Ch'ijin from "The Significance of School Plays," *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun* (November 20, 1955)[2]

In June of 1959, the bulletin for the Ministry of Education (*Mun'gyowŏlbo*) published an article titled, "Towards the Production of Truly Korean Korean cinema," spelling out in great detail over a dozen issues that South Korean filmmakers should heed in the interest of building a thriving national cinema. Among his several points, Shin Chongsŏng urged filmmakers to avoid plagiarizing or imitating Japanese films; to not "stray excessively from South Korea's social state of-affairs" (while admitting that imitation of works from the Free World is "inevitable for the time being"); to avoid the gloomy influences of Italian neorealism; and to refrain from "depicting scenes that express extreme, vulgar forms of grief" or "the cinema of tears" (i.e. *sinp'a*). Shin's article manages to reveal some key contradictions and anxieties that accompanied cinematic representation of South Korean everyday life during this period. We observe, for example, that certain foreign imitations and influences were looked upon more preferably (at

[1] Raymond Williams, *Preface to Film* (London: Film Drama, 1954), 22
[2] Yu Ch'ijin, "Haksaengyŏn'gŭgŭi ŭiŭi" [the significance of school plays], *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*, November 20, 1955.

least by the government) than others; imitations of American films were more tolerable, for example, than those of Japanese ones. Moreover, while Shin urges films to not depart too far from domestic "social state-of-affairs," he also dismisses Italian cinema as a viable model, even though what critics and filmmakers found so inspiring about Italian neo-realism was the perceived similarity of *saenghwal* between postwar Italy and South Korea.

The article is also remarkable for its thorough cognizance of the contemporary trends of the postwar South Korean film industry. Indeed, the problem of rampant plagiarism, the prestige of Italian neorealism, and the dominance of melodrama and the *sinp'a*-mode during this period have been explored at length by Korean- and English-language film scholars alike. Yet such studies have largely considered these phenomena separately, without emphasizing their interconnectedness. I argue in this chapter that the concept of "everyday feelings" (my translation of "*saenghwal kamjŏng*") was not only a crucial site of contestation in postwar cinema, but can serve as a conceptual linchpin that brings together debates over 1) plagiarism/imitation, 2) realism/neorealism, and 3) *sinp'a*/melodrama. In other words, these debates can be understood as discursive symptoms of *affective dimensions of governmentality* specific to the postwar historical conjuncture, overdetermined by various regimes of social, ideological, capitalist, aesthetic organizations, such as re-emerging culture of consumerism and leisure; the incipient visuality of "my car modernity" [3]; the psycho-affective reality of melancholia and wanting produced by widespread phenomenon of displacement, poverty, loss or separation from family; the pervasive sense of moral panic about evolving gender roles; and fits of censorship and regulatory excess implemented by an insecure anti-communist state.

The scandal of imitation and plagiarism, often discussed in this period in terms of the

[3] See Han Sang Kim, "My Car Modernity: What the U.S. Army Brought to South Korean Cinematic Imagination about Modern Mobility," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 75, No. 1 (February), 2016.

weakness of Korean screenplays and structural problems with the film industry, should be contemplated beyond considerations about the dearth of creativity or issues of post-colonial anxiety. The process of replication and repetition, after all, was at the heart of modern film production. Imitations, adaptations, and remakes were the norm even within the domestic industry that was facing an explosive demand for cinematic attraction. There was also the level of imitation that went beyond film-to-film relations to inspire imitation (at times unconsciously) in the spectator, as when theater-goers imitated, or were perceived to be imitating, what he or she saw on the silver screen after leaving the theater. In Chapter 1, we saw how Han Yŏngsu's photography addressed this phenomenon by rendering Korean human subjects and images of Hollywood stars appearing on the same plane. In Chapter 2, we explored literary engagement with this phenomenon in works by Kim Kwangsik and Nam Chŏnghyŏn. As I will show in this chapter, what was being conditioned and colonized through this process of sensorial saturation by Hollywood was the realm of "everyday feelings." To contest this form of inundation, critics and filmmakers began appealing to the rhetoric of sentiment (*kamgyŏk, kamdong*) to celebrate emotionally authentic moments of cinematic artistry.

These moments of emotional authenticity were repeatedly linked to the genre of realism. The critical success of the South Korean film *Money* (1958) drew comparisons with the Italian film *La Strada* (1954). While the potential for social critique made the South Korean government weary of this genre, critics and filmmakers embraced the possibility of enhancing the global prestige of South Korean cinema by using Italian neorealist films as models. A commonly uttered refrain to justify this imitation was the observation about the similarity of *saenghwal* across South Korean and Italian contexts. In many cases, the implied Western other was Hollywood and the cultural ideology of Americanism. In fact, as I will show later in the chapter,

for translator and scholar O Hwasŏp, Korean *saenghwal* offered a path towards a "global universality" that allied Korea to (European) Westernness, while strategically excluding the United States. Meanwhile, "everyday feelings" served as a conceptual arbiter of authenticity for whether an imitation was fruitful or derivative. What further allied Korean to European cinema was that the latter's "everyday feelings" were also under attack by the disproportionate influence of Hollywood.

While sentiments elicited by realist or neorealist cinema were valorized by critics, not all cinema-derived sentiments were deemed to have artistic merit. *Sinp'a*, a term employed loosely and unsystematically in the postwar as a theatrical medium, a convention of genre, and sentimental mode, was roundly derided by filmmakers and critics for its tediousness, fatalistic worldview, and premodern emotional sensibility. While dismissed glibly by Shin above as "cinema of tears," its origins in Korea was actually based in Japanese theater (*sinp'a* meaning, literally, "new faction") which had thrived as a form of popular entertainment during the colonial period. It had also entered into a collaborative relationship with cinema in its early years of evolution on the Korean peninsula, in the hybrid form of "kino-drama" (*yŏnsoegŭk*), in which theatrical venues projected films before putting on *sinp'a* performances, in order to take advantage of cinema's popular appeal. In the post-liberation years, the *sinp'a*-mode was absorbed into the film medium through classics such as *The Prosecutor and the Woman Teacher* (1948), a silent film that relied on the plangent narratorial supplement of a live *pyŏnsa* performance. In the postwar film criticism, the term "*sinp'a*" existed in tension with the term "melodrama," the former indicating cheaply sentimental, emotionally-exaggerated, and languorously-paced tearjerkers, while the latter referred to a film that was more modern, Western, and urbane, characterized by nuanced acting, dynamic mobility, and swift, rhythmic pacing.

The colonial-to-postwar genealogy of contestations between *sinp'a* and melodrama, as both a contestation between genres (shifting set of narrative, expressive conventions) and between media (theater and cinema) is strikingly evocative of Raymond Williams's early usage of the term "structure of feeling," which, for all its ambiguity and slippage—or perhaps because of it—has enjoyed much rehabilitation and recirculation within the context of cultural studies and affect studies in recent years.[4] Interestingly, Williams's own deployment of the term evolved over his career. We find the most commonly employed usage in *Marxism and Literature* (1977): a "particular quality of social experience and relationship…which gives the sense of a generation or a period," that cannot be reduced to categories of economic, political, or sociological analysis. By contrast, over two decades earlier in *Preface to Film* (1954), he emphasizes changes in narrative and expressive conventions within modes of representation such as literature, theater, and drama:

> …in the detailed study of a convention like the Greek chorus, which moved from dominance in the drama, through active equal participation, to the position of a mere observer and commentator, and finally, as its distance from the centre of action increased, into a mere interlude, and finally, a hindrance.[5]

In addition to Greek drama, Williams considers shifts in convention in Elizabethan tragedy and naturalism, among numerous other examples. All the more remarkably, Williams is not just concerned with shifts in convention *within genres or modes*; he is thinking about shifts in convention *across media* as well. This is expressed clearly in the concluding section "Film as Total Expression," in which he diagnoses sound films as suffering from over-reliance on naturalistic convention of dramatic speech. In his estimation, silent films—particularly German expressionism of the 1920s—developed innovative techniques to compensate for what was

[4] See Devika Sharma, ed., *Structures of Feeling: Affectivity and the Study of Culture* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015).
[5] Williams, *Preface to Film,* 22.

necessarily constrained at the level of speech. In other words, he is paying attention to ways in which evolving media conditions (not only the shift in dominance from theater to cinema, but from silent films to talkies) affect "structure of feeling" and their capacity to capture the fluid whole of social experience.

I am delving into Williams's notion of "structure of feeling" at some length not so it can serve as a master code to our understanding of the discourse of sentiment in South Korea, but because I believe both terms "everyday feelings" (*saenghwal kamjŏng*) and "structure(s) of feeling" share affinities as discursive symptoms of postwar massification and alienation, differently inflected by local contingency. For one, both terms are problematic for their totalizing tendencies. In the case of Williams, this totalization is utopic, the *a priori* positing of a communal society mediated by shared feelings. His theory seeks to renovate vulgar forms of Marxist materialism and produce a framework for reconstructing granular experiences of social totality (even at the level of the ineffable) through a rigorous examination of art. The slippage into "structure*s* of feeling" (in the plural) in *Marxism and Literature* acknowledged the complexity of class differentiation, and perhaps more tacitly, the emergence of multiple, overlapping cross-pressures of competing media forms and their affective properties. In the context of postwar South Korea, "everyday feelings" became a way to imagine a stabilized, normative emotional existence after the Korean War with a means of discursively pivoting between the granular concreteness of daily experiences and communal or ethnonational imaginaries.

If it is true (to quote from Williams from a different context) that "there are in fact no masses, but only ways of seeing people as masses,"[6] then we might say something similar about

[6] Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary," in *The Everyday Life Reader*, ed. Ben Highmore (New York: Routledge, 2002), 98

"everyday feelings," that the significance of term during this period is more usefully understood as an attempt to remedy effects of postwar dislocation, alienation, and increasing massification of media, entertainment, and culture. While the concept of "everyday feelings" may appear to refer to the most quotidian, self-evident aspect of one's inner life, the flipside of the term, or at least how it was employed in popular discourse, was a rhetorical attempt to remedy a mass-mediated social reality in which communal affect was increasingly a product of technologies of spectacle. ("Everyday feelings," like the term "everyday life," was both uniquely granular *and* standardized; it affirmed the importance of interior experience, while implying that the underlying structural pre-conditions of those emotions consisted in the social.) In other words, the discourse of sentiment during this period was meant to cast a communal net of intimacy and proximity to bring together a society devastated by war, division, poverty, and dislocation.

How does *sinp'a* fit into all this? I argue in this chapter that the shift from the so-called backwards structure-of-feeling of *sinp'a* to the Western and urbane structure-of-feeling of melodrama was organized by a gendered logic. This gendered logic also dictated what qualified as legitimate forms of realism, eliding the voices of certain feminist critics who argued that the "emotional state" (*shimgyŏng*, literally "state of the heart") and the "everyday feelings" of postwar women (e.g. widows, housemaids, Western princesses) should be epistemologically privileged as a revealing index of social reality. Film criticism, indeed all forms of artistic criticism, was a male-dominated field, and the grievances of women during this period were marginalized and ghettoized, fodder for "cheap" tearjerkers, while films focusing on male suffering (the inner anguish of disempowered and emasculated patriarchs, for example) had the potential to be valorized as (neo)realist prestige films. My argument is not that *sinp'a* ought to be regarded as *the* dominant or the most representative "structure of feeling" of the postwar period,

but that every discussion about "structure(s) of feeling" or "everyday feelings" is always already gendered (i.e. a *way* of looking at "everyday feelings"), and that the effects of this gendering organized the discourse surrounding critical categories such as *sinp'a*, melodrama, and realism.

The chapter moves from discursive analysis to film analysis. I begin by tracing Syngman Rhee regime's top-down approach to film policy and its attitudes towards various tendencies in the industry (as I have remarked on briefly above with Shin). Then I move on to the various opinions of South Korean critics regarding the state of national cinema, emphasizing their perspectives on trends such as imitation, realism, and *sinp'a*. Then I shift to a discussion of ways in which different postwar "types" of women were portrayed in the media, including widows, housemaids, Western princesses, and the après-girl, with an emphasis on commentators who underscored the importance of paying attention to the "everyday feelings" of women. In terms of film analysis, my readings do not assume that *sinp'a* is a discrete film genre, but rather, a loose cluster of expressive, narrative, and character conventions being assimilated into more modern cinematic entertainment. To label these films definitively as either "melodrama" or "*sinp'a*" would elide the necessary stylistic tension within this assimilation process. (As I have said, the term "melodrama," at this time, was primarily a marker for a Western genre that *opposed* the retrograde tendencies of *sinp'a.*) While I do not close-read any films during this period that were celebrated as "realist" (such as *Money* or *Stray Bullet*), I would argue for a similar approach of searching for moments in these films in which older, popular modes of emotional expression and narrative are being re-scripted.

I have deliberately chosen films (with the exception of Kim Kiyŏng's *The Housemaid*) that have escaped sustained scholarly attention in the English language. My readings of *The Widow* (1955) and *Holiday in Seoul* (1956) foreground the interplay between the visuality of

mobility and melancholia; while the former film mobilizes characters according to their private desire, curiosity, and jealousy, the latter work introduces the temporality of leisure, spectacle, and ennui. Both imprison their characters in the postwar affect of wanting and waiting. In the following section, I read *Three O'Clock on a Rainy Afternoon* (1959) and *The Housemaid* (1960) as political allegories of crisis of masculine sovereignty, which speak, respectively, to deep-seated anxieties about ROK's semi-sovereign position vis-à-vis the United States and to insecurities about Korean male authority over his upwardly-mobile "modern" household, both explored at the emotional (rather than an explicitly political) register. To this end, this section builds on my argument about the optics of semi-sovereignty begun in Chapters 1 and 2. Finally, my reading of *One College Woman's Confession* (1958) tackles the question of appropriation and authenticity of sentiment. While the film was criticized for its similarity to a French and a Japanese film, it also contained a protagonist who appropriates a photograph and a diary to pretend to be someone else. Like the rural enlightenment films discussed in Chapter 3, the film employs a meta-cinematic device, in which the courtroom speech functions as a portal into a story-within-a-story, harnessing the sentimental power of *sinp'a* without surrendering to its defeatist, fatalist logic.

The State vs. the Critic: Perspectives on *Sinp'a*, Neorealism, and the Problem of Imitation

In the years of reconstruction after the Korean War, considerable efforts were made to promote the development of South Korean film industry. The fantastic success of Yi Kyuhwan's *Tale of Ch'unhyang* (1955), attracting over a 100,000 theater-goers, showed that domestic films had a chance of competing with foreign films and drawing in large audiences. From 1955 to 1959, over a hundred titles were produced, leading to the so-called "golden age" of South

Korean cinema of the 1960s. 1957 saw the construction of Anyang Film Studio, the biggest of its kind in East Asia. The number of movie theaters multiplied from 90 in 1947 to 200 in 1959. In order to encourage more production and consumption of domestic films, there was a tax-exemption on tickets for domestic films, while in 1956, the tax for tickets for foreign films increased by 115%. Despite these measures, foreign films remained very popular. The late 1950s saw over 200 films imported per year, rivaling the era of market domination by foreign films during U.S. military rule.

During the mid-1950s, an important shift occurred in the top-down ideological campaign sponsored by the Syngman Rhee government. While the role of film regulation had been kept ambiguous between the Ministry of Education and the Bureau of Public Information, the division of labor was clarified. In 1955, the Ministry of Education would be in charge of "education, science, technology, arts, physical education, publishing, copyright, film censorship, and other cultural administration and broadcast management," while in 1956, the Bureau of Public Information was placed in charge of "legal proclamations, news, propaganda, propaganda film production, printing, periodicals"; in other words, within the realm of film production, Ministry of Education was charged with dealing with feature films while BPI was in charge of propaganda film production.[7] Feature film, then, became part of the organization in charge of less explicitly political functions, such as education, arts and culture. The task of national integration of its citizens and the instilling of national identity would go beyond crude methods of control (such as censorship and content regulation) and take on a *productive* role, of cultural protection and cultivation of the arts, such as policies of tax-exemption and prizes for excellent films.[8]

Various import policies in mid-1950s favored American films. For two days in early

[7] Yi Usŏk, "Kwangbok'esŏ 1960nyŏnkkajiŭi yŏnghwa chŏngch'aek (1945-1960nyŏn)" [film policy from liberation to 1960 (1945-1960)], *Han'guk Yŏnghwa Chŏngchaeksa*, 161.
[8] Ibid., 161.

September of 1955, Spyros P. Skouras, a board member of the American-Korean Foundation and the President of 20th Century Fox met with President Syngman Rhee.[9] A few days later, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry re-categorized foreign films under "general item" (*ilban pummok*). The Ministry of Education declared that while European films would be excluded for their failure to agree with national policy, American films would be recommended for import.[10] By 1959, U.S. films made up 80% of all imported foreign films screened in South Korea.[11] As Yi Usŏk points out, the domination of U.S. films in the foreign film market "cannot simply be attributed to Korean audience's preference for American cinema."[12] Yi goes on to argue that from the perspective of the South Korean government, opening up the market to U.S. films was a price they were willing to pay to secure political-economic aid.

However revealing, this pro-U.S. position observable through import practices belies Ministry of Education's more complicated attitude of ambivalence towards American *and* non-American foreign films. As I mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, Shin Chongsŏng (deputy director of the arts department of the Ministry of Education) spelled out over a dozen detailed points of instruction, at least six of which deserve special attention. I paraphrase them below with select emphasis.

1. Avoid imitating (*mojak*) and plagiarizing Japanese films, "except for unavoidable cases for the purposes of energizing the national spirit" (*minjok chŏng'gi*).[13]
2. While selective referencing or imitation of works from the Free World is "inevitable for the time being," South Korean films should not "depart excessively from our country's social state-of-affairs (*sahoe siljŏng*). Rather than imitating Japanese films, it would be preferable to imitate "more advanced allies of the Free World."[14]
3. Criminals should be legally punished on-screen. Even if, for an example, an abusive stepmother deserves condemnation at a "moral" level, if her child takes murderous

[9] "Film Magnate Skouras Arrives in Seoul," *San Bernardino Sun* 62, no. 2, September 2, 1955.
[10] Yi Usŏk, "Kwangbok'esŏ," 172.
[11] Ibid., 173.
[12] Ibid., 172.
[13] Ibid., 65.
[14] Ibid., 66.

revenge, then the culprit must be punished. In other words, "tears and sympathy cannot come before the law."[15]

4. Exaggerated depictions of ghettos, as well as the portrayal of brothels, should be avoided. The heyday of Italian neo-realism is over. It appears, "even Italian citizens could not find "sincere artistic vitality" or "truly enjoyable entertainment" in such works. Rather than dwelling on "wretched thoughts" of war-addled people, an expression of a bright, energetic march towards "liberty and happiness" might have more meaning and leave a deeper impression.[16]
5. Avoid "depicting scenes that express extreme, vulgar forms of grief" or "tedious, drawn-out scenes of wailing." It is often said that South Korean cinema is "the cinema of tears," or even, simply "*sinp'a*." It is also said that films that fail to bring its audience to tears are not profitable. But the films should strive to make the audience feel "a sincere, natural sorrow and sadness" and a "forced expression of such sentiments might only bring a bitter smile to the lips of audience." The solution for bringing about a more "true sorrow and tears" will have to come, not from "dramatic expression" but from "the screenplay."[17]
6. Avoid excessively lavish interiors. Foreigners who watch such movies may be surprised to encounter "the actual standard-of-living (*saenghwal sujun*) of South Korea."[18]

While the problem of imitating and plagiarizing Japanese works (#1) was seen to be particularly scandalous, it is more interesting to understand the phenomena more broadly in relationship to non-Japanese films and to the question of *what*, exactly, is being plagiarized or imitated. We see from #2, for example, that the problem was not one of moral principle or legal infringement of intellectual-property rights; on the contrary, the phenomenon is considered "inevitable for the time being." What is being lost in Shin's assessment is a more faithful representation of the country's "social state-of-affairs." We see this sentiment echoed again in #6, when Shin calls for South Korean films to convey domestic interiors within the realm of plausibility. One of the adverse effects of imitation and plagiarism, then, is a departure from a reality locally specific to South Korea. In other words, what is being imitated, Shin fears, is not only the *style* of the film, but the *content* of the nation's *saenghwal*.

[15] Ibid., 66.
[16] Ibid., 66-67.
[17] Ibid., 67-68.
[18] Ibid., 68.

Yet at the same time, as we see in #4, Shin calls for a move away from the aesthetic of Italian neo-realism. Interestingly, rather than focusing on the social-realistic aspect of the aesthetic, which had been widely observed to be one of neo-realism's strengths, he emphasizes the film's general mood of gloominess and its demoralizing effects on the national audiences to make his point, favoring, instead, films that are more cheerful and affirmative in spirit. While Shin does not make his points explicitly ideological, Ministry of Education had already shut down screenings of Italian films for the fear of being tainted by Communist ideology; Luigi Zampa's *La Romana* (*Woman of Rome*, 1954) and Giuseppe De Santis's *Riso Amaro* (*Bitter Rice*, 1949) were pulled from theaters.[19] Film critics condemned the authorities for their oversensitivity and incompetence. One commentator called such acts of intervention an "inconvenience to the freedom of the *saenghwal* of the nation's people," which raised questions about how ordinances passed while under USAMGIK-rule were "fundamentally violating [South Korean] constitution's stipulation for the freedom of the press,"[20] while another emphasized the fact that for "most ordinary citizens," the question of "quotas and censorship" mattered less than how they could watch quality films that would become "flesh and blood."[21] Biased as they might have been, it is still noteworthy to see the extent to which they understood global cinema to be a constitutive part of modern *saenghwal*, rather than merely a distraction or a sensorial medium of corruption.

Items #3 and #5 are particularly interesting in that they deal explicitly with the issue of excessive sentimental display. #3 suggests that such performances could confuse the audience's

[19] In the case of *La Romana*, censorship was lifted after it was determined that Alberto Moravia, the author of the novel the film was based on, did not have communist affiliations. "Romaŭi yŏsŏng, sang'yŏng kŭmji haeje" ['Woman of Rome,' ban of screening lifted], *Chosŏn Ilbo*, December 18, 1959, reprinted in KOFA, 361.
[20] "Yŏnghwa kŏm'yŏljedoe daehan pansŏng" [reflections on film censorship policies], *Chosŏn Ilbo,* July 22, 1957, reprinted in KOFA, 700-702.
[21] "Kŏm'yŏl'ŭi hyŏnhwang" [the present situation regarding censorship], *Han'guk Ilbo*, October, 23, 1957, reprinted in KOFA, 747.

grasp of legal order; by insisting that films respect the letter of the law, Shin implies that the affective appeal of "tears and sympathy" can undermine the legitimacy of the law. (This anxiety can be linked back to the cultural phenomenon of "The Human Family" described in Chapter 5, in which discourse of intimacy and sentiment threatened to subvert the rule of legality.) Shin also distinguishes between "sincere, natural sorrow" and "extreme, vulgar forms of grief," referring to the latter as the realm of *sinp'a*. Various critics during this period, criticized the aesthetic of *sinp'a*, distinguishing between artistically refined emotion and the excessive emotional displays of *sinp'a*. Poet Yang Myŏngmun wrote, "There's plenty of poetic sensibility (*sijŏk chŏngsŏ*) one feels from Chosŏn films. Korean sensibility, that is, our nation's special and unique (*yunik'han*) sensibility" which gives off "hometown pathos" (*hyangt'ojŏgin p'eessossŭ*)." This is a "high-value" (*kamnop'ŭn*) sensibility.[22] The emphasis on "high-value" seems to imply a contrast to the "cheap" (*kapssan*) sentiment of *sinp'a*. Shin Kuch'ŏl, for example, wrote that most works flowed with "cheap sentimentality" (*kapssan ssench'i*)[23] while Yi Tŏkjin calls for "doing away" with "cheap tears" (*kapssan nunmul*) and "cheap feelings" (*kapssan kamsang*).[24] It is interesting to note that Shin's solution for achieving "sincere, natural sorrow" rather than settling for "extreme, vulgar forms of grief"—as indicated in #5—lay explicitly in developing the art of screenplay writing. Shin was not idiosyncratic in his opinion that the screenplay was one of the critical defects of the South Korean film industry.[25] The chronic problem of plagiarism and imitation, for many of these critics, was just one symptom of this malady.

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[22] Yang Myŏngmun, "Han'guk yŏnghwa'esŏ nŭkkin sijŏk chŏngsŏ" [poetic sensibility felt in South Korean films], *Shinyŏnghwa* [new cinema], May 1958, 56.
[23] Shin Kuchŏl, "Hyŏnshil tamgue nun'ŭl tollyŏra" [turn the eye towards the investigation of reality], *Yŏnghwasegye* [film world] 5, no. 7, 52.
[24] Yi Tŏkjin, "Sinp'ajo hwaldong sajin'ŭi t'ap'arŭl wihayŏ" [towards the overthrow of sinp'a-style motion pictures], *Chosŏn Ilbo*, September 15, 1958, reprinted in KOFA, 104-105.
[25] For example, critic and screenwriter Yi Ch'ŏnggi describes the "diseased screenplay" as the source of "an absolute crisis of the South Korean cinema," which was linked to "an impoverished expressive beauty in the realm of interiority," "Pyŏngdŭn ssinarioŭi yŏng'yŏk" [the diseased screenplay and its territory], *Chosŏn Ilbo,* February 9, 1955, reprinted KOFA, 347-348.

Scholar and translator O Hwasŏp, in "The Discovery of a Korean Self," wrote at length on the relationship between "sensibility" (*ch'ŏngsŏ*) and "ideology" (*sasang*), arguing that while "ideology" was limited by locality, "sensibility" had the capacity to transcend time and space.[26] The reason that "guns, vanity, and spectacles" of American films often failed to appeal to Koreans was that it was pure entertainment—neither a distillation of ideology nor an appeal to noble sensibility. O went on to say that "sensibilities" could differ depending the nation (*minjok*) but under a certain "condition" (*chogŏn*) which "all of humanity possesses," it was "uniform." Under this formulation, when one was emotionally affected by a foreign film, one was "experiencing the same human condition." Unlike Poet Yang Myŏngmun who, above, emphasized "our nation's special and unique (*yunik'han*) sensibility," O Hwasŏp was pointing to human sensibility's potential for universality. This did not mean, however, that representation of Korean *saenghwal* should be elided for the sake of a de-nationalized or de-racialized universal:

> To speak of the Korean condition (*chogŏn*) is to speak of the Korean way of life (*saenghwal*), the theme of Koreanness. But this Korean condition should be something that is seen through the perspective of world history. The Korean condition is produced when observed situated midst the world's "balance" (*kyunhyŏng*)…We demand a writer who can preserve *a tradition that progressively* moves forward. Only such a writer can confront *the reality in which the particularity of the Korean condition and the universality of the world are shared*, and can capture the will of South Korea, *which continues to progress within that reality*.[27] (emphasis added)

O formulates "reality" as the historical nexus between the local particular and the global universal; in other words, the Korean and the global are not simply oppositional, but are metaphysically linked. While the modernizing logic of advancement is maintained, tradition has been hitched to the narrative of progress, as something that moves forward, rather than something to be simply preserved or condemned to the dustbin of history. What is worth

[26] O Hwasŏp, "Han'gukjŏk chaaŭi palgyŏn" [the discovery of a Korean self], *Yŏnghwa segye* [film world] 5, no. 7, 1958, 44-47.
[27] Ibid., 46.

mentioning here is that while the United States is not mentioned as emblematic of this universal (on the contrary, its spectacle-centered films were condemned, as I showed above, as failing to appeal to the higher faculties), O did name two non-American Western films for embodying universal value: Carol Reed's *A Kid for Two Farthings* (1955), the title of which was translated as "Smile in a Back Alley" (*Twitkolmogŭi miso*) and Federico Fellini's *La Strada* (*Kil*, 1954).[28] O praises Reed's film for how the characters strive to improve their reality through their back-alley *saenghwal*, conveying a "sublime logic" of protecting one's beliefs,[29] while Fellini's film is praised for its ability to "purify the soul."[30]

> Look at *La Strada*. Like the title suggests, besides the road, there was nothing but destroyed buildings! How did they manage to make a work of art of such lofty fragrance under such conditions? Why were we moved (*kamgyŏk*) when we saw this foreign film? It's because we saw in it a truthful human (*in'gan*), saw a way of life *(saenghwal*), felt a literature in its boundlessness. *In other words, the particular conditions of Italy's reality contained the power to appeal to a common sensibility of humanity. Around us, there is plenty of evidence that the particular Korean conditions can bring out the universal.* Korean themes can be found anywhere: our homes, our neighbors, our communities, and in our society. The question is how artists discover the Korean *saenghwal*, whether they can investigate the aim of our *saenghwal* and whether they can carry out the duty of artistically expressing it.[31] (emphasis added)

O goes on to argue that Korean "way of life" (*saenghwal yangsik*), in its endowment of "global universality," finds closer proximity to "Westernness" than to "Americanism." In this striking formulation, "Americanism" (*amerik'anijŭm*) is separated out from the conception of "the

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[28] A full-length feature on Fellini's *La Strada* and Italian neorealism appeared in the August/September 1957 issue of *Yŏnghwa segye* [film world].
[29] Ibid., 46.
[30] The relationship between spirituality and cinema, which speaks to the larger problematic of modernity, mechanization and mass society, is another salient theme of this period that cannot be explored in greater detail here due to limitations of space. For example, Kim Sŏngmin argued in "The Literariness of Cinema" that cinema is animated by the dialectic tension between a mechanical realist force and a spiritual dramatic force. "There are problems left undealt with in cinema's relationship with science," he argued. "There has to be, inevitably, some kind of drama in a cinematic work, and since the root of drama is inherently linked to literariness, it is continuously interested in morality and perspectives on life, and this interest comes through to the audience." See Kim Sŏngmin, "Yŏnghwaŭi munhaksŏng," *Munhak'yesul* 1, no. 3, (June) 1954, 106. In the same vein, Yi Pongnae, for example, declares that the "camera" itself is not mechanistic; rather, it functions as an extension of the "artist's eye" and the eye is in the charge of "depicting the human." "Pip'yŏng chŏngsin'ŭi nun" [the eye of the critical spirit], *Yŏnghwa'segye* [film world] 5, no. 7, September 1958, 48-51.
[31] O Hwasŏp, "Han'gukjŏk chaaŭi palgyŏn," 47.

Western/European" (*sŏgujŏgin'gŏt*), and this proximity is defined in terms of *saenghwal*. The similarity of *saenghwal* is the key, in O's view, for why Italian films are so moving to a Korean audience. This has to do with the shared "particular" trait that is linked to economic and political realities between Italy and South Korea. What O wants is for writers and directors to depict the process of "an advancing tradition" to find "commonality among its own kind (*tongnyu*) within the world." Here, again, O gets close to articulating a global universal that closes the gap between Koreanness and Europeanness/Westernness, while distancing Americanism from both.

O Hwasŏp's observation that the postwar *saenghwal* of South Korea and Italy shared an uncanny similarity was not an idiosyncratic view. In a *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun* roundtable, one politician made the point more plainly, "I saw *La Strada* and to be honest there wasn't much to it. They were just using the natural setting…But never saw anything more moving…If we just tried harder, I think we'd be able to achieve the international standard…We can do it too," while a professor from Korea University commented, "…[La Strada] was made inexpensively. Isn't there something similar about their *saenghwal* and our *saenghwal*?"[32] Shin Kuch'ŏl, in the same issue of *Yŏnghwa segye*, echoed O's sentiment that "the personalities and lives depicted on the screen [in *La Strada*] reflect those of our own; that is why we found ourselves in the realm of identification…When the issues of housing shortage and the demolition of shantytowns are the same here as in Italy, has any [Korean] director bothered to take up this problem?"[33]

Money (1958), depicting the struggle of an impoverished farmer and his son in the countryside, did take up this realist ethos. Despite its rural setting, the director Kim Sodong claimed to have been directly inspired by *La Strada*.[34] The following is an exchange in a roundtable with the film staff:

[32] "Ch'uya pangdam," *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*, October 10, 1957.
[33] Shin, "Hyŏnsil t'amgue nun'ŭl tollyŏra," 55.
[34] "Tonŭl ewŏssan chwadamhoe" [roundtable on 'Money'], *Kukje yŏnghwa* [international film], (March) 1958, 63.

Sŭngho (actor):	What's the point of imitating foreign films from some off-the-wall, faraway place, when we should be delving into our surrounding environment?
Sodong (director):	That's right. It has to be a drama wafting from the soil of our land where we were born and raised, where we've lived our *saenghwal*, and where we will die, for it to pierce us deep within our hearts where it truly pains us.
Sŭngho (producer):	Definitely. That's precisely the kind of scent that Italian films give off.
Ŭnhŭi (actress):	Rather than awkwardly imitating foreigners, we should strive to depict our distinct, indigenous customs.
Chin'gyu (actor):	If we're going to have a Korean (*k'orian*) realism, this is the only direction we can take.[35]

The voices of the filmmakers here are in striking harmony. Italy is not considered an "off-the-wall, faraway place," because a sense of rootedness it manages to convey, a method the filmmakers of *Money* wish to draw from. Director Kim also notably describes the force of the film's realism in terms of affect ("pierce us deep within our hearts"); the power of realism is measured in terms of its emotional power.[36]

Writer Cho P'ungyŏn spoke positively of *Money* in "Korean Films Going Abroad," an article focusing on films entered in the Asian Film Festival, while voicing some ambivalence about its commercial prospects outside of Asia.[37] While admitting that the film's tempo is rather slow, it argues that this is because the story itself is necessarily slow. The film manages to faithfully depict the "simple, modest everyday feelings (*saenghwal kamjŏng*) of countryside people," while presenting a story that could "very well have happened elsewhere."[38] Despite the film's artistic merits, Cho expresses ambivalence about the prospects of South Korean films in foreign markets by pointing to the phenomenon where Japanese films are having difficulty

[35] Ibid., 63.
[36] As director Kim noted elsewhere, "While make-belief (*kajang*) may be a necessary element in theater, since it cannot provide genuine emotion (*kamdong*), it cannot convey a genuine portrait of humanity (*in'gansang*) to others." See Kim Sodong, "Saeroun in'ganhyŏngŭi t'amgu" [study of a new human type], *Kukje yŏnghwa* [international film], October 1958, 49, 147.
[37] Cho P'ungyŏn, "Haeoero naganŭn han'gukyŏnghwa" [Korean films going abroad], *Kukje yŏnghwa* [international film], (April), 1958, 33.
[38] Ibid., 34.

attracting American audiences. He claimed that the moviegoers were not so "magnanimous" or "understanding" when it came to the gaps in "everyday feelings." (Furthermore, the tempo of Japanese films is deemed tedious.)[39] In other words, while the storyline of *Money* might have universal currency, he was predicting that the incommensurability of "everyday feelings" between countries could cause problems in the film's reception.

In the end, however, the fate of *Money* abroad was determined by a wholly different factor. While *Money* was selected by a committee of Film Producers Association to represent ROK in the Asian Film Festival, ROK's Ministry of Education, charged with the role of film censorship, complained that the themes were too "dark" and "inappropriate" and entered the whimsical comedy *Hyperbola of Youth* (1956) for consideration instead. Film critic Yi Ch'ŏnggi (who wrote *Holiday in Seoul*, discussed later in this chapter) responded in *Han'guk Ilbo* that the authorities had gone too far in their intervention, insisting that the point of the film was not to "distinguish between the rich and poor" by putting the "country's social institutions" or "the people's actual living conditions" on screen; rather, by showcasing the "the creative artistry" of each nation's filmmakers, they would seek to improve the art of film of "every allied nation" (*ubangjeguk*) of Southeast Asia.[40] Screenwriter Hwang Yŏngbin also protested in the same vein, citing for comparison Italian neo-realist films like *Bicycle Thief* (1948) and *Rome, Open City* (1945), as works that succeeded in clearly conveying "their culture" to the Korean viewers, without leaving terrible impressions about the nation of Italy. Both Yi and Hwang criticized the authorities for their over-sensitivity regarding the representation of South Korea's postwar

[39] Ibid., 35.
[40] Yi, Ch'ŏnggi, "Yŏnghwaje ch'ulp'umgwa naŭi ŭigyŏn: chayul sŏng'ŭl chŏnjung hara" [my opinion on the entry to the film festival: respect autonomy], *Han'guk Ilbo*, March 10, 1958.

immiseration.[41] Without siding with a class-inflected reading of *Money*, both critics appealed to the universalist value of artistic excellence. Hwang, in particular, underscored the emotional register—that is to say, the power of being "unspeakably moved" (*kamdong*) by the "inexorable fact that human beings have no choice but to try to survive" in such impoverished societies" and that "if a film was excellent as a film, it would evoke emotions (*kamjŏng*) in the artist."

This incident shows that even when united by cosmopolitan aspirations of increasing global visibility for domestic films, the South Korean government and film critics were divided when it came to weighing the value versus the liability of cinematic realism; the potential benefits of circulating a product of artistic value and recognition was offset, from the Ministry of Education's perspective, by the potential for embarrassment by laying bare nation's social and economic problems. It also shows the important role played by Italian neorealist films in helping filmmakers and critics (as well as other industry observers) imagine the possibility of a Korean realist cinema that could overcome the universal-particular problematic—that is to say, a cinema that was able to draw from the raw materials of a particular national experience and translate it into a universal work of art that transcended the limits of locality. This meant the question of how the reality of national *saenghwal* would be cinematically represented to elicit a *proper kind* of emotion became a key concern for prominent filmmakers and critics of the period.

Portraits of Postwar Women: Widow, Housemaid, Western Princess, and Après Girl

The question of how to elicit the proper kind of emotion, at the level of filmmaking technique, could not ignore the issue of acting and characterization. Yi Pyŏng'il, director of the

[41] Hwang, Yŏngbin, "Yŏnghwaje ch'ulp'umgwa naŭi ŭigyŏn: 'ton'ŭi riŏllisŭm'ŭl iteri kŏtkwa pigyohanda" [my opinion of the entry to the film festival: comparing the realism of 'Money' with that of Italy], *Han'guk Ilbo*, March 9, 1958.

critically-acclaimed *Wedding Day* (1956), wrote interestingly on the subject.[42] He begins his argument by laying out the particular historical predicament in which humanity finds itself losing its "balance." Among the causes are "mass production of technologized weapons, increasing mechanization of human beings, automation, development of mass communication." Within this conjuncture, human existence is in a "crisis of losing its sense of stability (*anjŏng*)." If humanity will overcome this crisis, Yi explains, there has to be a spiritual pillar we can rely on. As a filmmaker, he suggests that portraying a "new portrait of womanhood" can contribute to the task of "confronting this crisis of modernity."

Yi believes that by focusing on inner beauty, cultivation, and intellect in film's portrayal of women, cinema can have a positive effect on society. In his view, cinema and everyday life have a feedback-loop relationship. Film represents *saenghwal* on screen, and this representation, in turn, influences *saenghwal* both spiritually and ideologically. An ostensibly benign scene of domestic interior, for example, can signal a complex set of reactions in the audience who may choose to focus on the actress's beauty, a rare personal effect, or the splendid furnishings on display. As a result, the audience member may attempt to imitate what they have seen on screen. By focusing on portraits of womanhood that highlight grace, benevolence, and fortitude, he believes that film can have an ameliorating effect on the sensibilities of a postwar society racked with a sense of civilizational crisis.[43]

Yi's impulse to cultivate through cinema is continuous with what Steve Chung has

[42] Yi Pyŏng'il, "Saeroun in'ganhyŏngŭi t'amgu: naega yŏnghwae kŭrigo ship'ŭn yŏinsang" [study of new human type: the type of womanhood I want to portray in film], *Kukje yŏnghwa* [international film], (December), 1958, 50-51.

[43] Yi gives two sets of behavioral models that one might see on screen. 1) A protagonist walks down a corridor in the middle of the night, dragging her noisy slippers. In one case, she is unaware of the inconvenience she is causing others who are sleeping. In another, she removes her slippers and smiles to herself; 2) A young destitute couple share a meal they can barely afford and are on the verge of tears. In one case, the woman breaks into tears which causes the husband to break down as well. In another, she overcomes her sorrow and manages to squeeze out a smile, which causes the husband to smile as well. In both cases, the latter protagonist, Yi implies, embodies the kind of womanhood that can have a positive effect on Korean *saenghwal* and society.

described as the "enlightenment mode" that can be traced through the history of Korean cinema.[44] While Yi's vision took the role of women in the process of cultivation seriously, those who were interpellated for amelioration were also women; that is to say, Yi's attitude was patriarchal and patronizing, without seriously addressing the economic and social challenges that women during this period were facing. While he claims to be portraying a womanhood that is a "new human type" fit for the postwar era, the motivation for his intervention appears to have been reform as a means of preservation. Yi himself admits that the postwar period is a time of crisis. As director Kim Sodong (*Money*) wrote in a previous installment of the same series, "the end of the Second World War brought new emotions (*kamjŏng*) and new experiences (*kyŏnghŏm*) to our lives (*saenghwal*)"; "après-guerre" has brought about a "new visual field."[45] This rupture was experienced differently across gender lines.

For hundreds of thousands of women, the Korean War was a catastrophic event that turned the traditional, patriarchal arrangement of the household upside down. The hostilities produced approximately half a million war widows.[46] As a result, around 70% of them engaged in economic activity for their family's survival.[47] This marked a break from existing attitudes about women and work—namely, that aside from agricultural labor, women should not be

[44] Steven Chung, "The Century's Illuminations: The Enlightenment Mode in Korean Cinema," in *Split Screen Korea* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 21-46.
[45] Kim Sodong, "Saeroun in'ganhyŏngŭi t'amgu" [study of new human type], *Kukje yŏnghwa* [international film], October 1958, 49.
[46] Studies of war widows from this period have tended to include women whose husbands served as members of police, youth leagues, or the military, those who were reported missing while in service, and wives of civilians who died during the war, were killed or went missing while engaged in leftist activities or were massacred by the U.S. or Korean soldiers or police. See Yi Imha, "Chŏnjaengmimang'inŭi chŏnjaengkyŏnghŏmgwa saenggyehwaldong" [the wartime experience and economic activity of war widows], *Apŭregŏl Sasanggyerŭl ilgda* (Sŏul-si: Tonggukdaehakgyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2009), 223-224.
[47] According to Yi Imha, a survey from 1957 shows that 9.6% of women with living husbands engaged in economic activity while 88.8% of widows were engaged in economic activity. Vast majority of them were engaged in agricultural labor. The Korean War also had an important effect on how many women entered into different forms of commerce, the figure rising from 80,000 to 590,000 around 1952. Even in the postwar 1950s, approximately 200,000 women continued some form of commercial activity, and many of them were widows from the war. See Yi Imha, "Chŏnjaengmimang'inŭi chŏnjaengkyŏnghŏmgwa saenggyehwaldong," 244-245.

working outside the domestic space. During the years of the war, around 60% of women were employed in some manner. Though the figure did decline after the fighting ended, women would still occupy nearly half (46%) of the working population of South Korea until the end of the 1950s.[48]

Much more than the modern, middle-class ideal of "the housewife," it was the postwar figures of abjection—the war widow (*mi'mang'in*), the housemaid (*singmo*/*hanyŏ*), and the so-called Western princess (*yanggongju*)—who were emblematic of the social climate. Prior to the emergence of the nuclear-family structure that would solidify in the 1960s and 1970s, the immediate postwar "family" was a social institution in crisis. These postwar figures of abjection marked the constitutive exterior of *the notion* of the modern nuclear family. I emphasize *notion* because it had neither completely shed the patriarchal and feudal legacy of the old family system nor successfully achieved the material conditions of the modern nuclear family ideal. While opinions regarding these postwar subjects of abjection varied, there was consistent attention paid to the emotional lives of these women. In other words, for South Korea to achieve proper reconstruction, the emotional lives of women would also have to be rehabilitated.

While the gendered discourse of "cheap emotion" seemed to marginalize representations of female sentiment, some commentators insisted on the importance of women's emotional lives for understanding postwar society. Essayist Cho Kyŏnghŭi, in "Portrait of Widows," defended Korean widows against charges of moral laxity by pointing to the fact that it is because their

[48] Kim Hyun Sun, "Life and Work of Korean War Widows during the 1950s," *Review of Korean Studies* 12, no. 4, (December) 2009, 88. See Kim's article for a thorough survey of different attitudes regarding working women during this period. Kim goes on to argue that there is a "gap" between how women's labor was discussed at the discursive level and how the work was actually experienced. The ideal of the "modern woman," with its association of liberation and empowerment was rarely achieved. Most likely, the women were exploited for their economic contributions while they continued to carry out their traditional gendered roles as daughter-in-laws. Yi Imha, by contrast, has argued that the Korean War marked the appearance of women who challenged the "traditional order" and "patriarchal power" of Korean society, which was a break from the coercive labor of mobilization under Japanese colonial rule—as one subject claimed, "a necessary labor to keep my family alive." See Yi Imha, *Yŏsŏng, Chŏnjaeng'ŭl nŏmŏ irŏsŏda* [women, rising up beyond the war] (Sŏul-si: Sŏhaemunjip, 2004), 18.

"economic foundation" has become unstable that ethical codes have become difficult to abide by.[49] She claims the tendency to "fight and persevere" is stronger amongst women than the desire to "fall away from the frontlines of *saenghwal*." She warned against dwelling too much on tales of scandal which exploit "the moment of deepest crisis" when women abandon their husbands and sons to run off with their lovers, suggesting that this is not representative of the mindset of most Korean women. Interestingly, Cho uses the word *yŏnae*, which usually means "romance," but in this case, is used to mean "waiting and wanting." She writes, "Due to the civil war (*kungnan*), women of this country have felt sincere wanting and waiting. Countless women are waiting for the return of those whom they had loved and believed in like the heavens." According to Cho, then, the "frontlines of everyday life" (*saenghwal chŏnsŏn*) for women, is engaged and won at the level of sentiment; the state of the nation and the strength of its moral fiber is described in terms of the emotional content of the women's lives.[50]

Reporter and columnist Chŏng Chungnyang wrote in "The Future of War Widows" that 110,000 war widows (out of total 293,000 widows) are living in an "unfortified position" (*mubangbijidae*) as their sensibility suffers ruination and their way of life is shaken to the core."[51] She calls for another analysis of their wretched "slice of life," which involves taking care of aging parents and raising several children, all the while trying to "avert crisis of life-or-death on a day-to-day basis." Along the same line as Cho, Chŏng claims that what sets Korean women (*han'guk yŏsong*) apart is that their greatest strength lies in their "spiritual armament" (*ch'ŏngsin mujang*), which is both "sound" and "lofty" in its quality. While the ideal of chastity and sexual fidelity of Korean women is undoubtedly compromised, Chŏng blames a number of

[49] Cho Kyŏnghŭi, "yŏsŏng'ege tongnani kachŏon'gŏt: mi'mang'in mosŭp" [what war has brought to women: portrait of widows], *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*, November 12, 1953.
[50] Militarization of women's bodies, women's morality
[51] Chŏng Ch'ungnyang, "Chŏnjaeng mimang'inŭi mirae" [the future of war widows], *Saebyŏk*, March 1956, 82-85.

extenuating circumstances particular to South Korean postwar society:

> After living a life without having discovered freedom (*chayu*), there's the naturally-aroused intention to belatedly seek out the humanity they had lost, their own sense of individuality (*kaesŏng*), which had been [illegible] by society and by their husbands… and as these thoughts get tangled, they begin to grow skeptical towards their *saenghwal* and themselves, and the screws of their *saenghwal* come undone…their *saenghwal* shaken to the core.

Chŏng concludes that even as the women's sense of "constancy" (*chijo*) is compromised, they are not to be blamed. What is needed, instead, is a path for them to restore their *saenghwal* and for their plight "to be understood." This "understanding," she insists, is the duty of society and a way to "extend one's friendship as a comrade."

Housemaids (*singmo*) were also perceived as existing in a state of moral vulnerability. The precarious position of the housemaid in the postwar, as existing uneasily between premodern and modern concept of the "household" availed them to economic exploitation as well as emotional and sexual abuse. As scholar Yi Imha writes, "the unjust treatment and violence to which the housemaids were subjected directly reflects the society's feudal and violent attributes."[52] Yi goes on to observe that during the mid-1960s, ten percent of women employed in sex work had been previously employed as housemaids, a trend that was even more prevalent (up to twenty-five percent) in camp towns.[53]

A 1955 issue of *Yosŏnggye* brings this precarious relationship into sharp relief. Two articles from the same issue "Street Broadcast" and "Housewife, Housekeeper, Abuse and Downfall: Talk in the Streets" address this issue directly. The first article begins by pointing out how since the partial withdrawal of U.S. troops, the income of the so-called "Western princesses" (*yanggongju*) has fallen. It is critical of the general attitude of disapproval that people of South

[52] Yi Imha, *Yŏsŏng, Chŏnjaeng'ŭl nŏmŏ irŏsŏda* [women, rising up beyond the war] (Sŏul-si: Sŏhaemunjip, 2004), 117.
[53] Ibid., 119.

Korean society show regarding the "Western princess." The narrative fashions a collective voice in the form of a direct quotation in response to this widespread scorn, "Hmpf! We should be thanking you for your concern, I guess! Do you think we go around like this because we're proud of our profession? A store needs a signboard, right? So we have to announce our profession like this." The article goes on to declare, "We must have sympathy for the *yanggongju*."

In one example meant to highlight the women's virtue, they were described as showing compassion to beggars by unsparingly giving money that they have earned by selling their chastity. It follows the logic that sexual urges are "instinct" (*ponnŭng*) that, without the existence of *yanggonju*, would lead to rape. They are regarded, on the whole, sympathetically. ("I hope you make a lot of money tonight. Then you can have a few days of rest.") In this regard, Western princesses were either condemned for their "vanity" and "their corruption of Korea's ethnonational purity" or praised as "patriots" for strengthening the U.S.-Korea alliance by "bringing comfort" to hardworking American soldiers.[54] In both cases, their valuation as human beings was inscribed within the teleology of a patriarchal nationalist ideology. These articles brought out the homosocial sympathy among women that crossed demarcations of class, but this homosociality is seen to have been predicated on the idea of the good of the nation.

What is perhaps the most striking is the thin line that divides the figure of the housemaid and the Western princess. While the former is linked to traditional forms of domestic labor (and older ways of envisioning the household) and the latter is associated with Western (more specifically American) forms of sexual corruption and consumerist excess, people were all too aware that these subject positions were not completely exclusive. A housemaid living under

[54] Chu Chino et al., *Han'guk yŏsŏngsa kipi ilgi* [close-reading Korean women's history] (Sŏul-si: P'urŭn Yŏksa, 2013), 311-314.

(sexually) abusive conditions within a Korean household, once cast out of her house of employment, might have to resort to sex work on the streets. The line dividing these figures, then, was the line dividing the problematic of the traditional/modern and of the colonial/post-colonial. The scandal of Western princess (and the symbolic "rape" of the Korean people their existence implied) functioned to distract attention from the structural exploitation and abuses of housemaids within the postwar household.

Another emblematic figure of womanhood during the postwar era is the après-girl (*ap'ŭre gŏl*), which was a translingual adaptation of the French-term *après-guerre* (meaning, literally, "postwar")[55] According to scholar Kwŏn Podŭrae, the original term *après-guerre* had been used to refer to "a young man who had stabbed his older brother to death, a teenager who'd contracted venereal disease after sleeping with several women, as well as other instances of depravity," pointing to acts of "corruption, resistance, and self-indulgence," specifically through murder, robbery, and arson. By contrast, the Korean term *ap'ŭre gŏl* referred to "wild" women who were not "restricted or limited by moral ideations," especially within the context of sexual indulgence. While Kwŏn goes on to emphasize how the discourse of *ap'ŭre gŏl* intersects with that of existentialism (through which sexual freedom and existential freedom were conflated)[56], Yi Yŏngmi focuses on how their assertiveness, plucky attitude, and modern Westernized appearance marked a departure from the *sinp'a* sensibility of the past. Yi claims, "Acknowledging one's individual desires with no regard for existing morality, the [*ap'ŭre gŏl*]

[55] Kwŏn Podŭrae, *"Siljon, chayubuin, p'uraegŭmŏt'isŭm*" [existence, madame freedom, pragmatism], *Apŭregŏl Sasanggyerŭl ilgda*, (Sŏul-si: Tonggukdaehakgyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2009), 79.
[56] Ibid., 80.

characters in films undergo introspection and arrive at their action as principal agents, and compared to *sinp'a*-type characters, they are much more modern in their subjectivity."[57]

The phenomenon of "the après-girl" was differentiated from the scandal of "the Western princess" either through the après-girl's educational cultivation or class-background. (As we saw in my reading of Kim Kwangju's "Mixed Race Child" in Chapter 2, the middle-class *ap'ŭre gŏl* can be rehabilitated and re-incorporated into a proper, domestic *saenghwal*.) In this regard, the après-girl was thought to be the principal agent of her actions (rather than being a victim of poverty and other tragic contingencies, like the Western princess), whether this meant indulging in drinking, romance, or dance-hall culture. While the après-girl's behavior did put her reputation in jeopardy, her relationships were usually with Korean men, and her agency, at least in principle, was thought to be motivated by Western ideas of democracy and freedom.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will show how some filmmakers drew from combinations of different forms of feminine desire, wanting, and grievance embodied by these postwar "types." While these films appropriated modes of *sinp'a* and melodrama in idiosyncratic ways, what links these works across their varied aesthetics and sensibilities is a sustained interest in the issue of women's "everyday feelings" as both an index of social conditions and a site of potential rehabilitation.

Melancholy and Motion: *The Widow* (1955) & *Holiday in Seoul* (1956)

According to one film critic, Pak Namok's film *The Widow* deserved praise for its angles that "would have been hard to pull off had it not been arranged by a woman director" and the brightness of the story's tempo and rhythm. Furthermore, it "oozed an amiable quality" because

[57] Yi Yŏngmi, "Sinp'asŏng, panbokgwa, ch'ai" [characteristics of sinp'a: repetition and difference], *Apŭregŏl Sasanggyerŭl ilgda*, (Sŏul-si: Tonggukdaehakgyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2009), 314.

of its ability to "adeptly harmonize everyday feelings *(saenghwal kamjŏng*). It also managed to treat the "none too rare subject matter of the 'war widow' with such *dramatic unity*" [emphasis added].[58] As expected from my earlier reference to the critical emphasis on modulation of feeling, rhythm, and tempo, the film is praised not because of the subject matter but in spite of it. At least to this critic, the excellence in film technique outweighed the overworn theme.

The protagonist of the film is Shin who lives with her daughter Chu. Shin's husband died during the Korean War, and she gets by with the financial help of her late husband's friend Sŏngjin. Sŏngjin's wife suspects that there is something romantic between them and tries unsuccessfully to end their affair. Meanwhile, she is involved in an affair of her own with T'aek, a younger man. The story takes a turn when T'aek happens to rescue Shin's daughter from drowning. The two fall for one another, but Shin's daughter does not want T'aek to be her new father, and Shin eventually makes arrangements to have her grow up in a different household to protect her own happiness with T'aek. This arrangement is cut short when T'aek's old lover, Chin, presumed to be dead from the war, happens to cross paths with T'aek. T'aek leaves Shin to rejoin Chin, but Shin is shocked by this turn of events and draws a knife to attack her lover.[59]

The film was the first by a female director in Korean film history. It is also remarkable for putting into motion different forms of visuality within the same film—especially the opposing aesthetics of 1) movement and 2) melancholic stasis. I read these two tendencies as manifestations of postwar problematic: seeking to satisfy personal desire, which is inextricably linked to recreation and the consumption of urban space, and underlying sense of loss and longing that is linked to familial separation brought on by the Korean War.

These opposing tendencies appear in striking contrast in the opening shots of the film.

[58] "Mi'mang'in yŏgamdok" [female director of *The Widow*], *Tonga Ilbo*, February 27, 1955.
[59] The concluding part of the film has been lost. The final ten minutes of the remaining content is also without sound.

The showy opening shot from a moving vehicle conspicuously passes a uniformed American soldier on the road stationed by a sign that reads, "STOP: Vehicle Check Point" (in English). A large banner is shown hanging over the entrance of a bridge, which reads (in English and Korean), "The Project is a Part of Eighth Army's Program on Aid in Rehabilitation of Korea." The vehicle passes by these signs and moves on to present shaky shots of the streets of Seoul: cars gliding down the road, people walking up and down the street. The theme of U.S. military presence in South Korea, despite its glaring intrusion into opening shots of the film, never gets picked up again in the rest of the film. Yet, it is allegorically linked from the beginning to the very idea of mobility. Even without direct engagement with militarized spaces, the film will deal with traversal of boundaries over emotional terrain—through the movement of private citizens motivated by personal feelings and wants: lust, romantic love, and jealousy.

After this opening sequence, the first "non-documentary" shot of the film is of the widow's daughter Chu looking down with a pensive sadness. This melancholy, which is never entirely explained, stands in for the sadness of her mother—the war widow—an affective role which she consistently disavows throughout the film. Chu's melancholy seems to stem from the sadness of having lost her father, whose role is irreplaceable (as we find in Chu's rejection of T'aek as a potential father-figure later in the film). While the trip to Ttuk island does bring some amelioration to the child's mood, it almost leads to her death. Within the logic of the film, Chu must remain an irredeemably melancholic figure, an uncomfortable reminder to Shin of a past life that she cannot simply cast aside.

This melancholy mood is not limited to Chu. It appears in T'aek in the form of inexplicable ennui after his desire for Shin is fulfilled. Even when Shin's romantic narcissism finds fulfillment through her attainment of T'aek, he is seen vacantly staring off into space. The

source of T'aek's melancholy becomes clear when his old lover reappears in his life. In order to fully appreciate the significance of this scene, which happens so abruptly and without warning, and comes two-thirds into the film and completely overthrows the protagonist Shin's design, we must return to the thematic of film's use of movement—more specifically, how Pak Namok stages her shots of streetscapes.

As pointed out earlier, the film relishes in the documentary richness of the street shots and their mise-en-scène. What makes the film idiosyncratic—perhaps what the critic meant when he praised Pak's "angles"—is its privileging of frontality (a shot in which the actor faces the camera) and lateral movement, creating an intersection of two perpendicular axes of motion, especially when the camera is still [Figure 26].

Figure 26. Axes of tension. On the left, the architecture of the widow's modest home (which lacks privacy) is exploited to put frontal and lateral axes in tension. On the right, in a scene at the beach, this form of tension is "resolved" when a third party (with the umbrella, facing the screen) disturbs the linearity of the lateral axis. Prior to her interruption, the cinematography continues to emphasize the lateral flatness of the composition by having extras (other beachgoers) run from one side to another.
Source: *The Widow* (1955)

Unlike most Korean films of the era, which followed the Hollywood editing formula of the "shot reverse shot," tracking dialogues through diagonal, over-the-shoulder shots that go back and forth, *The Widow*, by contrast, employed the method of frontality, in which the characters speaks directly into the camera and sometimes moves directly towards it, followed by a "flip," in which the camera reveals the view behind. Another example of frontality would show a character walking directly towards the camera or away from it, with the glimpse of traffic (pedestrians or

cars) in the background moving laterally. This pattern is visible on the beach scene in Ttuk island where Chu almost drowns and is rescued by T'aek. The beachgoers in bathing suits move in the lateral direction (left or right) while the main actors in the scene look forward.

This pattern of mise-en-scène becomes crucial for staging T'aek's reunion with his old lover Chin. T'aek works as a signboard painter and is seen earlier painting a billboard for a Hollywood film (the camera paying close attention to his brushwork on the figure's eye). In the scene of the reunion, T'aek is painting the lettering on the glass display of the "Hwashin Department Store." It is through this glass that he sees Chin, the old lover he thought had died during the Korean War. It is the pre-established logic of the lateral-frontal axis that organizes so many of the street shots of the film that makes this rupture of recognition both jarring and satisfying. Chin's face, as she runs towards the display window and fills the screen as her face is rapt from the thrill of their reunion, the film seems to take on the broader problematic of the consumerist visuality [Figure 27].

Figure 27. Postwar reunion. T'aek and Chin are reunited through the transparent commodified surface of the hotel display window. This occurs during the process of T'aek's labor as a sign painter, which is portrayed previously as an artistic craft. The moment marks a rupture from the spatio-temporality of an alienating, commodifying streetscape. The postwar consumerist "everyday" is transformed when his love (lost during the war) is returned.
Source: *The Widow* (1955)

As photographers Eugène Atget and Walker Evans have famously shown, the visuality of the display window intensified desire by superimposing the consumer-subject over the commodity object and blurring the boundary between the subject and the object. The reflection of the desiring gaze creates the feedback loop inside which the object of the desire appears to be caught and suspended. As I have shown in my previous discussions of photographer Han Yŏngsu (Chapter 1) and writer Ha Kŭnch'an (Chapter 2), advertising signage contributed to both the helpless bedazzlement and alienation of city dwellers from their environment.

The appearance of Chin through the display glass is a curious alteration of this visuality. In this arrangement, T'aek is not a consumer but a laborer. He is in the process of investing his craft into producing a display window (again, the camera pays special attention to his brushwork) when through this object of his labor, he will come face-to-face with his lost love. The scene dispenses with the threat of alienation you would normally expect when one is bedazzled by the commodity spectacle, and instead, what is promised is a fulfillment of a different kind of longing. This kind of visuality, I argue, is part-and-parcel of what I would call a "postwar structure of feeling," which is manifested through overflowing expression of sentiment. This *sinp'a* mode, which has been repressed from the beginning of the film through Chu's melancholy and lack of flashback about the widow's deceased husband, comes roaring back, displaced, through T'aek and Chin's reunion. Shortly after, the two climb a hill and break out into a duet of "When Will We Meet Again?" transitioning to a sentimental flashback of the moment of their separation. This moment is so surprising because it shifts the center-of-pathos from the protagonist Shin to her rival Chin—a move that throws the film off-balance, all the more stunning because we were not even privy to Chin's existence until the very moment of her appearance. Rather than reading this as an instance of uneven plotting, I see this moment as the

film's succumbing to the *sinp'a*-mode that it could not completely suppress.

If the interplay of melancholy and motion organizes the affective mood of *The Widow*, a different kind of waiting and wanting characterizes Yi Yongmin's *Holiday in Seoul*. One reviewer for *Han'guk Ilbo* described it as "light and cheerful," containing "none of the gloomy shabbiness that is usually characteristic of Korean-produced films," and boasting a "light freshness."[60] Despite the lighthearted mood of the film, it is weighed down by a different kind of listlessness that is linked to the logic of scheduled leisure—or more specifically, the ennui that comes when the regimentation of one's leisure time is broken.

The film's opening shot, like *The Widow*, is self-consciously thinking about the camera in motion. It begins with a voice-over narrator who is sutured to the camera and can interact with characters within the film's diegetic space. For example, he wonders while riding the train, "Why is it so empty? Shouldn't it be rush hour?" The camera-eye approaches an old man who is seen taking a nap in T'apgol Park in Seoul and follows him home. He ends up being a down-and-out neighbor of the film's well-to-do protagonists: a newspaper reporter Chae'gwan and his wife Hŭiwŏn who is an obstetrician. The camera then segues into the diegetic space of the film, as the narrator asks, "Shall we take a look?" as the camera enters the domestic interior of the couple's lavish house. Like the theme of U.S. soldier who haunts the opening credits of *The Widow*, the meta-cinematic device of the "talking camera" drops away, but continues to inform the film's visuality with respect to recreation, commodification, and personal desire.

The plot is simple. Hŭiwŏn has planned a day off for her husband Chae'gwan and herself from their busy work schedule, but he is pulled away by a prank call by a group of mischievous colleagues who pretend to feed him a tip on the "Hu'amdong Murder Case." Chae'gwan ends up

[60] "P'ungginŭn sinsŏnmi sŏulŭi hyuil" [whiffs of freshness *Holiday in Seoul]*, *Han'guk Ilbo,* December 5, 1956, reprinted in KOFA, 607.

getting mixed up in a completely unrelated scenario in which a mentally distressed woman is being kept locked in a house. He spends a good part of the film with her locked in that room until crossing paths (also completely by accident) with the actual Hu'amdong murderer, whom Chae'gwan and his taxi driver are able to neutralize. Meanwhile, Hŭiwŏn spends the day idly dreaming about the day she would have had if her husband had followed the schedule. She also does a fair amount of work solving her patients' problems. A young woman gets pregnant and a crying girl leads Hŭiwŏn to an ailing pregnant woman who turns out to be the wife of the Hu'amdong murderer. In the film's final segment, Hŭiwŏn and Chae'gwan are reunited in the house of the murderer but with conflicting interests. While Chae'gwan is eager to break the story, Hŭiwŏn insists that to do so would mean unbearable shock and certain death for the wife (of the murderer) who has just given birth. The film's final shot shows the couple outside the house of the ailing woman, which sits on the top of hill, overlooking Seoul.

During the lovingly teasing exchange between the couple, Hŭiwŏn announces the schedule she has drawn up for the day:

10:20am	Get ready
10:30am	Depart
12:00pm	Shop for neckties and parasol at the Shinshin Department Store
1:30pm	Gourmet Chinese food at Asawŏn
3:30pm	Waterski on Han River
4:30pm	Stroll through Tŏksu Palace
6:30pm	Dinner
7:30pm	Los Angeles philharmonic

The exchange is peppered with Western words, such as "rendez-vous schedule" or "plan"; Hŭiwŏn also insists that after three months of having no time to themselves, it is her right to "enjoy" their time. Yet once the call about the Hu'amdong murder case comes in, and the couple is separated, the schedule is jettisoned, and a different kind of temporality enters the picture—that of "unscheduled time" and its attendant anxiety [Figure 28].

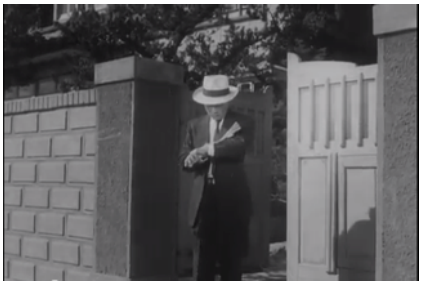

Figure 28. Close-ups of watches. Shots of characters checking the time abound in Holiday in Seoul (1956)

One effect of this "unscheduled time" is the postwar affect of waiting and wanting that is featured so prominently in *The Widow*. Unlike *The Widow*, however, it is not linked to the historical trauma of the Korean War (i.e. familial separation), but rather, to the day-to-day regimentation of clock time—in this instance, in service of leisure as consumption. We see this both with Hŭiwŏn and her elderly neighbor, who is being deceived by his wife (she has told him that she is going out for a perm, but she has no intention of returning early to waste her precious holiday with her husband). Both, now that they have resigned themselves to waiting for their spouses, enter into an alternate space-time of daydreams, which the film tracks. For Hŭiwŏn, this involves flipping through magazines and books, which serve as a portal into the day she had planned to enjoy all along, involving, for example, a boat ride on the Han River. For her elderly neighbor, it involves listening to old songs on the radio and reminiscing. The intermedial dimension of these sequences—deploying popular literature and radio and moving across different age and gender groups and their particular sensibilities (thereby appealing to a broader audience) self-reflexively points to the appeal of the cinematic medium itself and its ability to open portals into alternate fantasy spaces.

Another example of this "unscheduled time" takes place in what is perhaps the most bizarre and unexplained set piece in postwar South Korean cinema. Chae'gwan gets himself locked in a room for about half-hour of the film's duration with a woman who has lost her mind. The scene seems willfully designed as a set piece in that there is no reasonable explanation for why and how Chae'gwan gets himself stuck in a room with a woman he does not even know by seemingly well-intentioned people. It is explained by her sorrowful mother that the twenty-year-old young woman, played by Mun Chŏngsuk, was taken advantage of by another man. The audience learns that not only her body but her mind has been "corrupted." She calls Chae'gwan

by the name of Pyŏngch'ŏl, Sangchŏl, Insu, and Tonghwa, as her expression goes from contorting in anguish to beaming with joy within the same shot. It is left unclear whether these men are real. The range of emotions she conveys—that of joy, sorrow, hysteria, grief, lovesickness—represents a catalogue of sentiments of excess that were being critiqued by *sinp'a*-phobic film critics of the era [Figure 29].

Figure 29. Forms of fantasy. Hŭiwŏn uses a life-style magazine to transport herself into a fantasy space from the comfort of her own house while she waits for her husband Chae'gwan to return. Chae'gwan, on the other hand, is held captive by a woman who has ostensibly lost her mind due to spurned love (bottom right)*. The latter woman's hysterical comportment serves as a foil to Hŭiwŏn's urbaneness and poise throughout* Holiday in Seoul.

While the madwoman performs her emotions, Chae'gwan can only watch in utter bafflement and frustration. Just as the affective mood of *The Widow* was organized around the repression of the *sinp'a*-mode of sentimentality, until it returned powerfully with T'aek and Chin's reunion through the display window, I see this scene in *Holiday in Seoul* as operating chiefly to *contain* the sentimentality of *sinp'a* within a film that is seeking to establish a different dramatic logic of speed, leisure, and modern romance. There is a meta-cinematic quality to these absurd performances that elevate it beyond the *sinp'a* mode, to a self-conscious parody of its own

excess, which is embodied by the actress Mun Chŏngsuk.[61]

The character of Hŭiwŏn's demeanor and professional position also play an important role in managing and regulating emotional excess throughout the film. Though people around her try to insinuate that her husband is having an affair, her expression remains very restrained, betraying only a tinge of concern. And while her profession seems to make her a magnet for interpersonal conflict—for example, when she is visited by young Ogi (a neighbor—the daughter of the old man who is followed by the voice-over narrator in the beginning of the film) who has gotten pregnant out of wedlock—she remains poised, and more amused than distressed by the situations she is called upon to handle. In the case of Ogi, she helps the family track down the man who was involved with her, and he eventually resolves to correct his ways and live a virtuous life.

Hŭiwŏn's competence as a crisis-manager extends to the final act when she runs into her husband in the film's denouement. Chae'gwan is eager to publish the news about the Hu'amdong murderer, especially when he learns that the murderer's wife has just given birth (he has already thought up a headline: "One life trampled, another born"), while Hŭiwŏn insists that he take the wife's emotional state into consideration. This confrontation is staged with a newspaper photographer standing between the couple, the camera with the giant flashbulb hanging from his neck. The scene marks the moment when Chae'gwan's journalistic and documentary curiosity turns to predatory lust for scandal [Figure 30]. Hŭiwŏn stands as the reliable arbiter of decency at that very moment, brining her husband back to his senses. While he is angling for a hot scoop

[61] Mun, who was relatively unknown at the time, would go on to appear in some of the best-known melodramas of the period, such as *Life* ("Saengmyŏng," 1957), *Soil* ("Hŭlg," 1960), and *Stray Bullet* ("Obalt'an," 1961). By contrast, the career of the starring actress Yang Mihŭi who seemed on the verge of stardom (especially after appearing in a key supporting role in the wildly successful *Madame Freedom* earlier that year) never panned out. Even with *Holiday in Seoul*, she was criticized for what some saw as a stiff, indecipherable quality to her acting. By the mid-1960s, she had stopped appearing in films altogether.

that will sell papers, she—the obstetrician she is—focuses on the body, health, and the importance of sentiment; her concern, after all, is that the ailing woman's body would succumb to the shock of the news. When Chae'gwan, as the agent of sensationalism, defers to his wife's recommendation, he accepts her call for moderation. What is invoked in this negotiation is a new postwar feminine ideal—an urban professional who can manage one's leisure time, who consumes lifestyles, and yet is not neglectful of those who are less fortunate, and reins in the excesses of her husband. The final shot, which overlooks the city of Seoul, expands out from the ailing woman to the entire city as the object of the couple's nurturing and watchful gaze. This scene functions as the sublimation of the previously voyeuristic camera (linked to the isolated, whimsical narrator, motivated by personal curiosity) that had been confined to street-level views and household interiors. The camera gaze has assumed a "loftier" meaning (in more sense than one), elevated from a figure of a personalized, voyeuristic drive towards emphasizing a shared vision of public good and neighborly responsibility.

Figure 30. Sensationalism and Sensibility. Chae'gwan and Hŭiwŏn argue, while a newspaper photographer with a camera stands between them, awaiting their decision. Chae'gwan wants to break the story, but Hŭiwŏn is more concerned about the emotional welfare of the woman under her care.

Sovereignty and Sacrifice: *Three O'Clock on a Rainy Afternoon* (1959) & *Housemaid* (1960)

Like the two previous films we have seen, the opening sequence of Pak Chongho's *Three O'Clock on a Rainy Afternoon* privileges the visuality of recreation, travel, and movement.

Unlike those films, the subjectivity of the gaze is sutured to a Korean-American war correspondent named Henry Chang. While the film supposedly takes place during the Korean War, wartime destruction is nowhere to be seen. Instead, Henry rides around in his jeep (conspicuously marked "War Correspondent"), taking in sights at palaces and T'apgol Park [Figure 31]. In contrast to Henry's vibrant, touristic mobility (which is perfectly captured by the opening shot of a small plane in an airfield), Sumi, the heroine of the film, is found weeping on a park bench. The reason for her sorrow, much like what we saw with *The Widow*, has to do with the Korean War; her fiancé Inkyu is thought to be dead. Rather than melancholy, Sumi's psychological condition better fits symptoms of hysteria: general excitability punctuated by fits of emotional excess. In this regard, the *ap'ŭre gŏl* sensibility of the scenes between Sumi and Henry is explained away as a symptom of romantic loss. What further protects her from potential stain of moral corruption (protection usually not extended to *yanggongju*) is that her romantic partner, Henry Chang, is Korean-American. This dual affiliation is critical for how the film succeeds in pursuing the fantasy of Americanization without forsaking post-colonial ethnonationalist ideations.

Figure 31. The Korean-American war correspondent. From the beginning, Henry Chang is linked to mobility, touristic desire, and American cosmopolitanism.
Source: *Three O'Clock on a Rainy Afternoon* (1959), Korean Film Archive.

Henry Chang's American-affiliation is established in a number of ways. The newspaper office where he works is staffed by Americans. (Alongside actual American actors, the chief editor of indeterminate ethnicity—played by the square-jawed Nam Kungwŏn—speaks Korean

with a cartoonishly labored accent.) Henry is on familiar terms with a debonair bartender, and keeps a houseboy, as many U.S. personnel did during this period. Though Henry Chang rarely speaks English and appears to be Korean in every other way, these associations mark him as "American." Everything from his courtship, his proposal, and even marriage ceremony, is thoroughly defined by American culture and influence. He takes Sumi dancing at a bar, where they outshine the other dancers and attract the admiring gaze of American patrons [Figure 32]. He takes her on a date filled with recreational activities, such as riding around in go-carts, frolicking in a swimming pool, and taking photographs of her on a hill. When she agrees to marry him, the ceremony is held in a military church, officiated by an American. Only when they are ready to depart for the honeymoon is Sumi alerted to the fact that her fiancé, whom she had thought dead, has returned alive.

Figure 32. Role reversal. Henry and Sumi attract the adoring gaze of Western spectators at the bar. The scene, for a thrilling moment (for Sumi, as well as for Korean viewers) suspends the hierarchical logic of U.S. cultural hegemony.
Source: *Three O'Clock on a Rainy Afternoon* (1959), Korean Film Archive.

The film's moral logic questions the legitimacy of Henry and Sumi's marriage on grounds that Sumi was already engaged to be married to Inkyu. From Sumi's perspective, she is saddled with an impossible decision. This energizes the *sinp'a* mode, which removes her from her position of agency and renders the competing men as the primary moral agents. In the final act of the film, Inkyu and Henry confront one another to debate who has a more legitimate claim to Sumi. Inkyu claims, "You have a healthy body and a new life (*saenghwal*), but all I have is

Sumi." He goes on to remind Henry that once Henry leaves Korea, he is free to forget everything (including Sumi), but the same cannot be said for Inkyu. Henry argues in response, "Are you confident that you can make her happy? If you can make her happier than I can, I will give her up." Henry's moral authority is further buttressed by the wedding that has already taken place in the U.S. military church.

The characters Henry and Inkyu embody competing imaginaries and structures of feeling of South Korean *saenghwal* underway during this period. While Henry stands for mobility, personalized desire, material comfort, Inkyu languishes in self-pity, frustration, and physical disability. When he realizes he may not be able to win Sumi back, Inkyu plays a song on the living room piano (singing, "The hometown where I used to live is a remote mountain village where flowers bloom"), and collapses into his mother's arms. In this moment of emasculation and infantilization, Inkyu has become a *sinp'a* subject, frustrated by forces larger than himself, and appealing to a time of innocence and simplicity that is linked to the countryside. Likewise, Sumi is also ultimately rendered as an innocent victim of the *sinp'a* mode when she is insulted by Inkyu's younger sister and called a "*yanggalbo*" (another word for "Yankee whore") for showing her affection to Henry. This traumatic insult and her inability to find a solution to her dilemma leads directly to her death. The symbolism of her death in the denouement is heavy-handed: she is said to have perished suddenly due to a "heart-related illness" before she can go with Henry to the United States. Hearing the news, the chief editor tells Henry as they stand in the airfield, "Many Americans leave Korea with a heavy heart, but with time, they'll be able to forget everything," a seemingly throwaway line which resonates now with prophetic power, with respect to how the Korean War has been framed (or not framed) within American collective memory.

While Sumi's conflicted desires that eventually lead to her demise go beyond the inability to choose between two men. It is a conflict of paradigms of subjectivity, of affective modes. She is torn between traditional code of loyalty and the lure of the "new *saenghwal*," which invokes within her a desiring subject who seeks self-fulfillment. What fails to be negotiated in *Three O'Clock* are competing ontologies of the self. While the film draws energy from the dynamism and movement of a "modern melodrama" from this period, its affective and moral register reverts to the *sinp'a*-mode by the end. Sumi is the South Korean nation tragically embodied, rendered as a pitiful figure of sacrifice.

The Housemaid is another film addressing the theme of sacrifice, within the context of domestic labor and management. The previously discussed films, while covering a range of female "types" of the postwar, avoid the issue of domestic labor. *The Housemaid,* by contrast, by focusing on the household drama of an upwardly-mobile middle-class family, makes visible the unfolding psychosexual tensions and lays bare the exploitation of capitalist accumulation. As discussed in Chapter 5, the "nuclear family" as a social imaginary was emerging as a powerful global myth and a marker of modern living in the years after the Second World War. But in addition to the problem of a divided nation, the fabric of South Korean society had been torn apart at the level of the family.

The postwar imbalance in gender ratio and persistent patriarchal attitudes and institutions meant impoverished women who were without family or home, had few choices other than turning to work as housemaids (*singmo*). As discussed earlier in the chapter, the popular press was riddled with stories about how housemaids were victimized by their employers. Not only were housemaids cheap exploitable labor, they were perceived as targets of sexual opportunity by male heads of the household, and often vulnerable to other forms of emotional and physical

abuse as well, with little available recourse. Stories of revenge were rare, but when they occurred, they captivated the public's imagination—as can be seen in "Reprisal Against Violated Chastity," which describes the case of a young housemaid who, after being raped, "lured the family's three children into a reservoir and drowned them."[62]

The postwar social reality of gender imbalance finds exaggerated expression in Kim Kiyŏng's psychological thriller.[63] Tongsik is a father of two, a loving husband, and a piano player for an all-female chorus group at a factory. While he is portrayed as an object of romantic fantasy by the factory girls, his masculinity is in crisis from the very beginning. His feminization (perhaps best displayed by the gender-reversal in which he cooks for the family in the kitchen of the new house) while it is not explicitly acknowledged by Tongsik himself, is among the incongruous details of the film that create a tension and discomfort in the film, such as the young son Ch'angsun's casual cruelty against his disabled sister Aesun. While his job commands respect, the real breadwinner of the household is the wife, whose diligent housework and entrepreneurial mindset have made them homeowners. Their new house, which serves as a marker of their modern, upwardly mobile-mentality, becomes a claustrophobic stage for most of the film. Indeed, in stark contrast to the other films discussed in this chapter, the aesthetics of street life and urban spectacle have been elided to stage the ways in which psychological drama of domestic interiors can shed light on the gendered exploitation of capitalist advancement.

The claustrophobic staging of the house is accentuated by several factors. The upstairs window to the balcony of the living room exist primarily for the audience, and this gaze is often sutured to the voyeuristic gaze of the housemaid character who lives in a small room next door.

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[62] "Chŏngjo yurin pobok" [reprisal against violated chastity], *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*, July 31, 1956.

[63] According to director Ha Chiljong, "Kim Kiyŏng has always depicted Korean society in an exaggerated way, but there is no need to get caught up with the question of how absurd or nonsensical it can all seem. If the story is absurd or nonsensical, it's because that's precisely how he sees South Korean society." Yi Hyoin, *Haynyŏrŭl ponggihada,* (Sŏul-si: Omajua Ch'ongsŏ, 2002), 48.

By contrast, the rooms downstairs (where Tongsik's family reside) feel hermetically sealed. The sliding doors between these partitioned spaces play an important role throughout the film, marking the entry of other members of the household who are motivated by curiosity, suspicion, resentment, and desire. The film's privileging of interiors is underscored again when the family begins to accumulate furnishings, decorations, and appliances to go with their modern home. The introduction of Western-looking dolls and a new TV set blasting images of young Western women dancing jubilantly, adds even more surreality to the home interior. When Tongsik shares his reservation about owning a TV and says they can just go to the movies, his wife replies, "That's why I want our home to have everything." The desire for consumerist accumulation is linked to the desire to isolate themselves within the home enclosure.

In addition to the spatial compactness, the several clocks on the wall of the living room produce an enigmatic, *temporal* density, the way the walled-in spaces on the first floor produce a cramped, labyrinthine configuration of space. This pre-occupation with time is linked, at first, to the workaholic ethos of Tongsik's wife. But her devotion to the sewing machine, which has virtuous, productive associations, is eventually linked to a bestial, pathological obsession. This link becomes obvious with the introduction of a squirrel in a cage (with a "running wheel"), which Tongsik gives Aesun as a gift (as a reminder to strengthen her disabled body). This also calls to mind an earlier scene in which the housemaid plays with and kills a rat—emphasizing her animal-like quality. The film is suggesting that the fixation with the sewing machine is no less an animal-like compulsion to succeed in the material world.[64] In this way, the housemaid,

[64] This Janus-faced quality of the characters extend to Tongsik himself. He is uxorious and tender to his wife while imperious and curt to the factory girls and his piano students. In one of the few scenes stages outside the house, when an older friend encourages him to keep "certain secrets between husband and wife," Tongsik condemns the man as being "corrupt" and walks off righteously. Then in his car ride home, he flies into a rage and grabs the driver like a maniac. This wild fluctuation in behavior, from self-poised civility to wild fits of anger, is emblematic of the Freudian logic of Kim Kiyŏng's moral universe. For Kim's fascination with Freudian psychology see Yi, *Haynyŏrŭl ponggihada*, 56.

the economically active wife, and the physically disabled girl are all allegorically linked to the shared struggle of survival.

These struggling female characters appear to be minor alterations of postwar "types" discussed earlier in this chapter. Rather than a victim, the housemaid becomes a sexual predator. Rather than a war widow, the economically active woman has become an entrepreneurial wife. The disabled daughter Aesun is particularly interesting because images of disability in the postwar period tended to focus on boys and men. U.S.-sponsored publications emphasized the role played by American aid organizations towards physically rehabilitating these maimed bodies to productively re-mobilize them towards Reconstruction. In the case of Aesun in the film, the focus is more on her will to fight, rather than actual capacity to work (she is a child after all). The pet squirrel and the running wheel are meant to stand for the desire to persevere. This logic explains why Tongsik allows Ch'angsun to tease his sister to climb the staircase.[65] In this regard, the staircase represents both the possibility of upward mobility and the site where the battle of wills take place. It is where the housemaid intentionally (though indirectly) brings about Ch'angsun's death, where Tongsik nearly murders both his piano student Kyŏng'ŭi and the housemaid on separate occasions.

The staircase also serves as a nexus between various living spaces and the ways of life (*saenghwal*) they stand for. The lower floor is the space where the immediate family resides. At the top of the stairs, there is the bedroom for the housemaid which exists across the living room where the piano is kept. The juxtaposition of these two spaces on the same floor is convenient

[65] The desire for survival (at any cost) is a consistent lesson being taught and embodied in the actions in Tongsik's household. When Tongsik's wife decides to give up her own status as "the primary wife" and concedes her position to the housemaid, or when Tongsik himself flies into a rage and threatens to kill his piano student Kyŏng'ŭi or the housemaid in order to save his family, they are behaving consistently in order to ensure the survival of "the family." Hence we get the incredible scene in which he nearly strangles Kyŏng'ŭi to death, only to tell her afterwards, while still heaving from his murderous exertion, that she should return for more lessons because he and his wife are expecting another child. "I can't let your infatuation with me destroy my family," he says. "Come back for more lessons. We still need the money."

from a plot perspective, but it is also symbolically significant. The living room is the room which excludes the housemaid as laborer rather than full participant, and the proximity of the piano to her living quarters has interesting consequences. The housemaid is at once alienated from and captivated by the sounds of the piano, symbolizing bourgeois cultivation, which her own labor makes possible. Tongsik's repeated warning to the housemaid that she keep away from the piano only intensifies this curiosity. After Tongsik succumbs to the housemaid's temptation, she gains pleasure from creating cacophonous music on the keyboard. This dissonance becomes the strident reminder of Tongsik's own hypocrisy (his pretense of cultivation and integrity). On a larger scale, it gives the lie to the desire for the family's shared desire for middle-class respectability, which is predicated on the housemaid's expendability.

While the tone and tenor of *Three O'Clock* and *Housemaid* differ drastically, both films are deeply concerned with how women must become sacrificial subjects within the patriarchally determined domains of sovereignty. In *Three O'Clock*, Sumi plays the subject who is caught between two conflicting *saenghwal* represented by her Korean fiancé (Inkyu) and Korean-American husband (Henry). The irresolvable question over the legitimacy of her marriage to Henry, officiated by an American minister in a U.S. military church, stands in for the geopolitical question of South Korean sovereignty in relationship to the United States. Within the film's masculinist logic, Sumi is neither able to act nor speak towards a determined choice; her body serves primarily as a tragic figure of national sacrifice. (In the final scene, the sorrow linked to Sumi is elegized as shared sorrow about the Korean nation.) In *Housemaid*, the domain of sovereign contestation is the household—more specifically, the modern home, organized, at least in theory, around the nuclear family. Within this configuration, the housemaid exists as necessary labor that is rendered contingent and dispensable. But the housemaid, unlike Sumi in

Three O'Clock, is reluctant to offer herself in silent sacrifice. Her instincts are to fight back and draw the other "full" members of the family into the sacrificial logic of upward mobility. Indeed, it is important to note that the turning-point in the film is *not* when the housemaid succeeds in murdering Tongsik's son but when Tongsik's wife immediately accepts her son's death and declares that it would be better to go along with the housemaid's demands to maintain Tongsik's good name and at least leave open the possibility of restoring normalcy to their household (even without their son)—in other words, *when she accepts her own son as a sacrificial subject.* This acquiescence places Tongsik's wife on the slippery slope which eventually leads to her demotion to the status of a maid, and finally, to Tongsik's own death. The shock and horror of *Housemaid* stem from the perverse and willing reversal of the sovereign order of modern domesticity, which is configured to protect and privilege certain participants as full members while rendering others as necessary (yet contingent) others.

Innocence and Emotional Authenticity in *One College Woman's Confession* (1958)

As indicated earlier in this chapter, the tendency to imitate or plagiarize pre-existing films was so common that *The Bulletin of Ministry of Education* tried to dissuade filmmakers from resorting to *mojak*. Yi Ch'ŏnggi's script for *Holiday in Seoul,* for example, was called out by a film critic as plagiarism of Akira Kurasawa's *One Wonderful Sunday* (Subarashiki Nichiyōbi, 1948), leading to a public feud between the accuser and Yi. Shin Sang'ok's *One College Woman's Confession,* fell under similar suspicion for drawing too heavily from Henri Decoin's *Abused Confidence* (Abus de confiance, 1938) and Shūzō Fukada's *Confessions of a Female Prosecutor* (Aru onna bengoshi no kokuhaku, 1940).

The protagonist of Shin's film is Soyŏng who is studying law in Seoul, but cannot finish her degree because her grandmother, who has been financially supporting her from the

countryside, has passed away. With the help of a detective-novel loving friend Hŭisuk, they managed to dupe national assemblyman Ch'oe Rim into believing that she is his long-lost love child. While Soyŏng is finishing law school, the assemblyman's wife grows suspicious about Soyŏng's background, investigates, learns the truth, but does not act on it. When Soyŏng finally becomes a public defender, she defends a woman who has been charged with murdering her ex-lover. In a moving speech, Soyŏng defends the honor and integrity of the defendant in the name of all women who have suffered due to poverty. Even after a successful day in court, Soyŏng is racked with guilt and resolves to leave her family when the assemblyman's wife assures her that she has known the truth all along. The film ends on a note of positive affirmation of Soyŏng and her adoptive family.

Figure 33. Mixing mystery and sinp'a. *Hŭisuk, who enjoys reading detective novels, enables Soyŏng's plot to pretend to be the assemblyman's daughter. The objects that enable this scam are a personal diary and a photograph. In one shot (right), the diary, titled* "shimkyŏng" *(or "state of the heart"), is juxtaposed with Western fashion magazines to underscore its emotional authenticity as a personal belonging.*
Source: *One College Woman's Confession* (1959)

What really sets Shin's melodrama apart is the way in which he blends elements of the detective-genre into the narrative. The role of Soyŏng's friend Hŭisuk is crucial both at the level of plot and theme. It is Hŭisuk who initiates the plot for Soyŏng to pretend that she is the assemblyman's daughter. The film *needs* Hŭisuk's fanciful, cheeky, and adventurous qualities, so that Soyŏng can remain relatively innocent; indeed, it is the combination of Soyŏng's initial (but aborted) attempt at trying to deceive the assemblyman and a darkly opportune car accident which hospitalizes her that renders her into a relatively innocent co-conspirator in the plot.

Hŭisuk's thematic contribution to the film is most strikingly captured in a shot in which she is holding a book splayed over her face, so that the abstractly rendered illustration on the cover stands in for Hŭisuk's own face, thereby highlighting the theme of masquerade [Figure 33].

The masquerade is enabled by two personal effects that Hŭisuk is in possession of—a diary titled "The Heart" (*shimkyŏng*, 心境), which belonged to assemblyman Ch'oe's former lover, detailing the ordeal and grievances which had to be endured by her, and a photograph depicting Ch'oe's old lover and their love child. The emotional authenticity of the objects functions in an interesting way. While they derive their affect from the author, their sentimental appeal can be usurped by others, as is demonstrated by Soyŏng and Hŭisuk's plot. This theme of a narrative of emotional authenticity being de-coupled from the original subject returns in the final chapter of the film, when Soyŏng serves as defense attorney for a woman who is accused of murdering her ex-lover in cold blood. Here, a different kind of masquerade is performed, in which the woman on trial becomes *every* woman through Soyŏng's lamenting appeal to the court.

> Everything I say from now isn't simply a defense for my client, Chŏn Sunhŭi, but rather, an earnest plea on behalf of all women. The [defendant] is just one example of many women who had been raised under difficult circumstances. But no matter how wretched and miserable Sunhŭi's existence might have been, the fact that she graduated high school shows that she had hope, which was the *budding flower of love, striving to break through a cold barrier of ice. Moreover, who could have foreseen that her innocent love would become the seed of misery and root of her tragedy?* (emphasis added)

The rhetorical flourish exceeds the legal register to appeal to the sentiment of the audience (both in the courtroom and in the movie theater). This sets up the film's meta-cinematic moment, in which, Soyŏng's role as the defender slips into the role of the movie narrator (*pyŏnsa*), opening a portal into a story-within-a-story. For a ten-minute stretch, the film viewer is taken through the trial of the young defendant Sunhŭi who comes to Seoul from the countryside in search for her lover (whom she refers to as her husband), loses her job at the garment factory, and works odd

jobs to support her child. She almost comes close to selling her body for food, then decides, instead, to rob a store instead. In a twist perfectly within the coincidence-prone logic of the *sinp'a* tale, she runs into an old schoolmate at the store, who appears to be well-off financially. When Sunhŭi visits her friend's house for help, it turns out that her friend's husband is none other than Sunhŭi's old lover. Reeling from shame and dejection, she stabs her old lover with a fruit knife.

The story-within-a-story logic of the film produces a tension of identification. We are both asked to identify with the plight of the defendant Sunhŭi *and* displace that identification on to Soyŏng. This can be gathered from the fact the film does not even dwell on the legal fate of Sunhŭi; her function is important insofar as her trial provides Soyŏng the opportunity to sublimate her own guilt. It also allows the assemblyman Ch'oe (who is also guilty of having fathered a child out of wedlock) to symbolically absolve himself through this public display of sentiment. This affective spectacle performs a social function in that it does not merely distract but produces a ground for the coming together of community, not through contractual, legal, or identitarian considerations, but on the bases of shared grievance, frustration, and mutual moral implication. As will be discussed in my treatment of *Tonga Ilbo*'s "The Human Family" in Chapter 5, there is a utopic blending of tropes of legality and sentiment, an expression of a communal will, however unrealistic, that the logic of mercy and pathos can override the brute callousness of the law. As Soyŏng claims in her statement to the court,

> They say that law must apply equally to all people without discrimination…[but] the law is administered by human hands…We must look beyond the actual crime to all the facets of human suffering. And because we cannot uncover these facets without shedding tears, I believe the mercy of these tears must be given a voice in this court today.

The cinematic appropriation of the *sinp'a* mode in Shin's film can be better understood once we turn our attention to how it offers an interesting variation from a classic *sinp'a* film

from the post-liberation period, Yun Taeryŏng's *The Prosecutor and the Woman Teacher* (1948). In both films, an unexpected confession in a court of law contributes crucially to the story's climax. In Yun's film, the confession is by a prosecutor who encounters his old teacher (the woman teacher) who has been wrongfully accused of murdering her husband. The prosecutor's testimony to the kindness and integrity of the teacher's character (based on when she was his teacher) contribute to her exoneration. His benevolent intervention saves the day, restoring justice and order, lifting the teacher out of the state of wretched self-flagellation, which is typical of heroines of *sinp'a* tales, who tend to blame themselves for their predicament in spite of their innocence. Though it is widely considered to be a piece of classic *sinp'a* cinema, Yun's film ultimately resolves by bending towards modernity and enlightenment, re-affirming the virtue of reason, reciprocity, and the ethos of hopefulness.

Similarly, Shin's film wants ultimately to direct the story away from grievance, suffering, self-flagellating frustration. Shin's film differs, however, in that even while it relies on the device of courtroom confession to resolve the conflict, what is being summoned in court (by Soyŏng) is not simply the story of Sunhŭi, but the *very narrative and affective mode of* sinp'a *itself*. This move is akin to the citation and containment of the *sinp'a* mode I described earlier in this chapter in reference to *Holiday in Seoul* (with the character of the pathologically performative mad woman). Once the symbolic work of absolution is done through the narration of Sunhŭi's suffering, the ground has been laid to construct a new family that is no longer weighed down by the sentimental baggage of past sins.

Another chief difference between Yun and Shin's films is that the latter rely primarily on the agency of women to resolve the central conflict, while the former places the redemptive agency in the prosecutor. As I have shown above, the first half of the film unfolds in a logic that

is a blend of *sinp'a* and mystery. The entanglement of the plot, which also propels it eventually towards resolution, is both the fanciful scheming of Soyŏng's friend Hŭisuk *and* the vagaries of circumstance, which, in the parlance of the *sinp'a* worldview, would be called *sungmyŏng* or *unmyŏng* (i.e. fate, destiny)—as when Soyŏng is struck by a car or when Ch'oe Rim happens to find his old lover's diary among one of Soyŏng's belongings in the hospital, thereby becoming convinced that Soyŏng is his long-lost daughter. In the second half of the film, Hŭisuk's role is diminished when the role of active agency is transferred over neatly to Ch'oe Rim's wife, who begins to investigate her suspicion that Soyŏng is not who she says she is. Her character, played with admirable complexity by Yu Kyesŏn, offers a problem for the audience. On one hand, her investigation is at odds with the interest of our heroine Soyŏng, but at the same time, Ch'oe's wife, who has already agreed to invite a stranger into her own home as her stepdaughter (to do so, she says begrudgingly, "is the right thing to do as a human being."), has the moral authority to pursue this suspicion, especially since the audience knows the truth. The final resolution, as it turns out, is not mediated by the patriarch Ch'oe Rim, who remains blissfully in the dark about Soyŏng's identity. It is possible only because Ch'oe's wife, even while having discovered the truth of Soyŏng's identity, withholds her knowledge from both Soyŏng and her husband, and grants forgiveness to Soyŏng at the crucial, climactic moment when the burden of her own guilt threatens to send her fleeing from home. What makes this scene of absolution very curious is its relative restraint when compared to the earlier courtroom scene. For the duration of the court room scene, the *sinp'a* mode in its generic aura, has hijacked the film, there is hardly a dry eye in the courtroom. In the scene with Soyŏng and her stepmother, by contrast, Ch'oe's wife is conveyed with greater restraint, revealing an individual moral decision through a moment of magnanimity and grace that is particular to the character. Even more importantly, this gesture

also rescues Soyŏng from *having* to confess, that is to say, it keeps her suspended between guilt and innocence, while producing an implied understanding which becomes the basis of their quasi-maternal bond. (Ch'oe, the patriarch of the family, is crucially left out of this bond.) In a fascinating turn, if Soyŏng's mischievous friend is endowed with the agency to propel the film forward in the first half of the film, it is Soyŏng's stepmother who takes up agency to bring about its moral resolution with her mix of investigative wile and maternal mercy.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown the significance of the idea of everyday feelings (*saenghwal kamjŏng*) for a proper understanding of the South Korean cinema of the 1950s and the contemporary critical discourse surrounding it. The question of how emotion would be conveyed and evoked played a central role in how critics valued (or devalued) *sinp'a*, melodrama, and realist cinema. There was an ongoing discursive and aesthetic tension between the colonial, "backwards" *sinp'a*-mode and the Western, "modern" melodramatic mode. The desire to shift from the former mode of affective spectacle of embodied stasis to the latter mode of dynamic mobility meant that the expression of sentiment would have to be re-coded to better fit the technological properties of modern cinema, with an emphasis on speed, pacing, and rhythm.

The critical discourse of realism during this period was inherently gendered. While some critics recognized the importance of understanding the emotional and inner lives of women as providing a window into postwar social reality, most saw representations of the suffering of women to be a tiresome cliché operating within the *sinp'a*-mode. From the perspective of the South Korean Ministry of Education, the influence of Italian neo-realist cinema was thought to be socially unsettling at best and communist at worst. From the perspective of South Korean

critics, while realism seemed to occupy a position of cultural prestige above matters of mere "entertainment," a close look at how they praised Italian works (such as *La Strada*) reveals that the power of emotions (*kamjŏng* or *kamdŏng*) played a crucial part in guaranteeing their universal or cosmopolitan currency. The articulation of a Western universalism that excluded the United States and the Hollywood aesthetic is crucial for our understanding of the postwar-1950s. When critic O Hwasŏp who worked consistently with cultural organizations sponsored by USIS explicitly elided "Americanism" from the potential for humanist universalism he finds across Italian and Korean historical contexts (for which the notion of *saenghwal* is the primary reference point), we see that American cultural hegemony in South Korea was not successful in achieving a monopoly on the future trajectory of modernity.

My selective readings of films in this chapter have primarily focused on the different ways in which the *sinp'a*-mode was being incorporated, appropriated, cited, and/or contained within the melodramatic cinema of the period. My point has been that *sinp'a* is best understood, not as a simply a bundle of narrative, expressive conventions of a bounded genre, but as a "structure of feeling" that is being negotiated within the melodramatic mode of the 1950s. Throughout *The Widow*, the affect of melancholy (embodied by the daughter and the widow's second lover) is counterbalanced by the affect of wanting and personal desire (embodied by the widow). The film sublates the *sinp'a* mode until towards the end of the film, when it can no longer be suppressed; through a coincidental encounter (mediated through a department store display window), lovers separated by the war meet again, and the temporality of nostalgia and reunion overtake the historical present. If *The Widow* organizes time according to the logic of waiting and wanting, then *Holiday in Seoul* organizes time according to scheduled leisure. Escapism in this film is indulged through consumerist daydreams (mediated by lifestyle

magazines, radio). It undertakes the containment of the *sinp'a*-mode through more symbolic gestures of citation, as we see in the madwoman who performs different "roles" of fallen women while literally "contained" in a room. *Three O'Clock on a Rainy Afternoon* begins by portraying the heroine as a woman with "après-girl" sensibilities, who is the love interest of a Korean-American journalist. The visualization of their courtship pulsates with the vibrant aesthetic of mobility and leisure which the male lead embodies. Yet she is revealed, in the end, to be a *sinp'a* heroine, helpless when forced to choose between two competing ontologies of the subject, which the men in her life stand for. *The Housemaid,* rather than becoming the sacrificial subject of *sinp'a*, inverts the logic of the helpless, tragic heroine, by turning the son, and eventually the actual masters of the family, into subjects of sacrifice. The latter two films are particularly useful for our understanding of how battles over sentiment in melodramatic narratives have the capacity to stage contradictions of "domestic" sovereignty. In *Three O'Clock*, the site of contestation is the *sinp'a* heroine's heart, the feminized national territory over which the two men (Korean and American) compete for dominion; in *The Housemaid*, the circumscribed terrain in question is the emerging social unit of the nuclear family.

One College Woman's Confession also incorporates the *sinp'a* mode for sentimental effect. Its meta-cinematic qualities are particularly intriguing and layered; not only does the film incorporate the *sinp'a* sensibilities in the court room scene by introducing a story-within-a-story, it seems to comment allegorically on some of the very themes that gripped the South Korean film industry during the period. For example, the protagonist's appropriation of someone else's tragedy as her own mirrored the problem of rampant imitation and plagiarism of foreign scripts during this period. Ironically, Soyŏng is able to find symbolic absolution by universalizing the tragedy of her client Sunhŭi as representative of all women through the act of telling her story.

But within the film's logic, the women whose lives the protagonist usurped (the daughter she claimed to be and the defendant she represented) are forgotten. Their erasure functions not only to save Soyŏng but also her status of quasi-innocence; by the end of the film, she is beside herself from the rapture of being understood without having had to confess.

Another film released around this period involved the usurpation of a sentimentalized diary for profit. Yu Hyŏnmok's *Even the Clouds are Drifting* (1959) was a film adaptation of *Nianchan*, a diary by Yasumoto Sueko, a young girl who had chronicled the everyday trials of her family's impoverished life in a mining town in the Saga prefecture in Kyushu.[66] Originally published by Kobunsha in 1958, the book was a huge success among Japanese readers.[67] What made this story an attractive candidate for appropriation by the South Korean film industry is that Yasumoto was Zainichi (i.e. an ethnic Korean residing in Japan). Yet efforts to adapt the story into film soon ran into obstacles when the South Korean authorities wanted to halt production. The reasoning was that the social context of the diary was Japan. Even if the author of the diary was ethnically Korean, the original was still deemed a Japanese publication, which was officially banned by the Rhee administration during this period. Furthermore, the government could have been concerned that the South Korean reading public would consider President Rhee to be partially at fault for the suffering of the Zainichi people.[68] (Indeed, President Rhee was known to have shown little investment in the issue of repatriating Koreans from Japan after the end of the Second World War.) In the end, *Even the Clouds are Drifting* was set in South Korea with Korean character names. (Sueko's name, for example, was converted

[66] Scholar Kim Sŭnggu also focuses on the phenomenon of the film from the perspective of the emergence of "children's film" as a genre, situating it among a body of works from the colonial period (1930s) into the Pak Chunghee era (1970s) See Kim Sŭnggu, "Adong changmunŭi yŏnghwahwawa hanil munhwa kyosŏp" [film adaptations of children's writing and Korea-Japan cultural negotiation], *Han'gukhak yŏn'gu* 41, (June) 2012, 152.
[67] Ibid., 147.
[68] Ibid., 151.

from the Japanese into "Malsuk.") Film critic Ho Hyŏnch'an praised the film by saying, "more so than the 'reality' of their *saenghwal*, the film used lyrical sensitivity to depict a fantasy of a peaceful and not so unfortunate life that the young writer had dreamt about." [69]

If *One College Woman's Confession* dramatized the problem of appropriating the singularity of one's emotional life, then the true story behind the production of *Even the Clouds are Drifting* was the process by which a document of emotional authenticity was appropriated by the publishing and film industry for financial gain. The most uncanny scene in Yu's film depicts the moment when Malsuk, upon learning that her diary will be published, arrives at the newspaper office. The audience's perspective is aligned with her gaze as she looks out at the roomful of adoring reporters with their notepads and cameras. Here, Malsuk is more than just a modified version of Sueko, adapted to appeal to a South Korean market. She is the embodiment of the *national affective consensus*, overdetermined by the affective governmentality of "everyday feelings," dislocated and alienated from the specificity of Sueko's own experience, and packaged as a sentimental feel-good story. Modes of *sinp'a* and realism, though they are detectable, get sublated into the logic of a feel-good melodramatic entertainment. (It does not conform entirely to the logic of *sinp'a*, because the protagonist is too young and because the success of Malsuk's diary eventually lifts her family out of poverty. The element of realism is also sublated by the story's sentimentality; potential class conflict between Malsuk's brother and the operator of the mine where he works, for example, is resolved through symbolic acts of kindness that leave the structures of exploitation untouched.) *Even the Clouds are Drifting* is a film that, while emphasizing the emotional authenticity contained within it, alienated it from the very conditions that produced it. Despite its initial disagreements with the government, the Ministry of Education included the work among a list of recommended films of 1959.

[69] Ibid., 152.

CHAPTER 5

Overcoming Postwar Atomization: The Affective Adaptation of Steichen's *The Family of Man* in the Popular Press

> "It was conceived as a mirror of the universal elements and emotions in the everydayness of life—as a mirror of the essential oneness of mankind throughout the world."
> —Edward Steichen, *The Family of Man* (1955)[1]

> "It's called 'The Family of Man.' It says 2.7 billion people throughout the world belong to one family. I couldn't understand this at all. My wife and I are a family of two, and we're at each other's throats like sworn enemies, so what are they talking about? Are they saying that everyone in the world can be a family, but my wife and I've been left out?"
> —Ch'u Sik, "Discharged from Humanity" (1957)[2]

In the October 1951 issue of *Popular Photography*, the article "Photography Fights Communism" pictured a scene of spectators crowded outside the United States Information Service (USIS) office in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, some of them craning their necks for a better look at the exhibition of *Amerika* in the display window [Figure 34].[3] The article described the camera as a "weapon for truth,"[4] playing a "dramatic role in the State Department's global information program," allowing the United States to "cross the barriers of language and bring the truth about America to all people."[5] Another photograph in the article depicts a closer shot of the crowd and their "intent faces," which purportedly "reveal the impact of photography used as a

[1] Edward Steichen, "Introduction," *The Family of Man* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1955).
[2] Ch'u Sik, "In'ganjedae" [discharged from humanity], in *Ch'u sik sosŏl sŏnjip,* ed. Kim Yŏng'ae. (Sŏul-si: Hyŏndaemunhak, 2013), 160.
[3] Stanley Kalish and Arthur A. Goldsmith Jr., "Photography Fights Communism," *Popular Photography*, October 1951, 40.
[4] This U.S. government interest in the relationship between truth and photography for propagandic purpose was not a uniquely postwar development. Jeanie Carson shows that those in charge of wartime propaganda campaigns at OWI were deeply involved with the question of how best to photographically represent everyday life in the United States to their allies and enemies abroad. She traces aesthetic variations in OWI photography to ideological and institutional disputes within the agency. See Jeanie Cooper Carson, "Interpreting National Identity in Time of War: Competing Views in U.S. Office of War Information (OWI) Photography," American and New England Studies Program, Boston University, January 1995.
[5] Kalish and Goldsmith, "Photography Fights Communism," 44.

weapon for truth." The caption goes on to insist to American readers that, "to the oppressed and misinformed," the pictures say "This is Freedom! This is the way we live!" A sample photo from the *Amerika* exhibit features a doting father seated in a chair surrounded by his two loving children, with his wife standing supportively behind him: the American nuclear family ensconced in middle-class comfort in a moment of staged domestic bliss.[6]

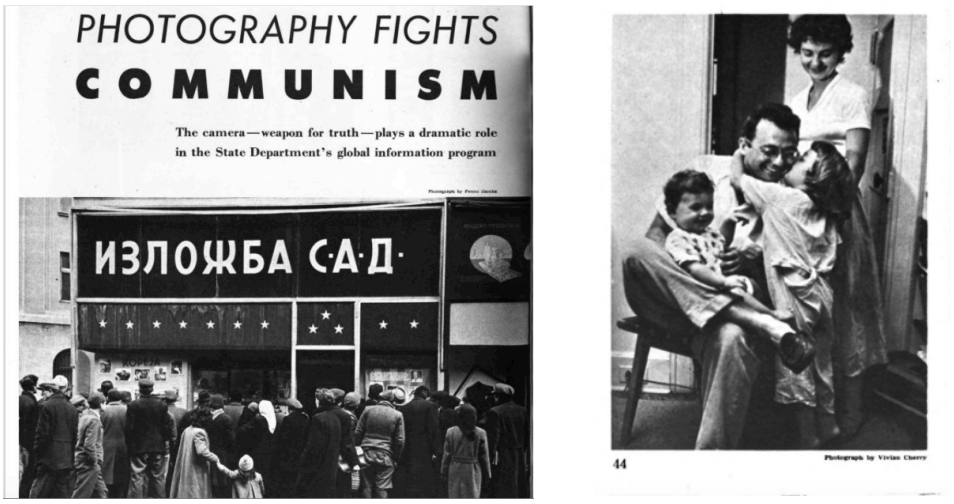

Figure 34. "Photography Fights Communism." Citizens of Belgrade look through USIS display window to see exhibitions on U.S. reconstruction efforts in South Korea and photographs depicting domesticity in the U.S. Source: *Popular Photography* (October 1951).

This photographic campaign was a "global information program" in more ways than one. It brought representations of the United States to the world through photography and provided a mirror reflection of the postwar world as it was being reconstructed under U.S. aid and influence. For example, a closer look at the shot of the USIS office in Belgrade reveals the title of the poster board: "KOREJA"[7] In South Korea too, USIS centers played a crucial role in circulating America-related materials, not only to cultivate and improve Korean ways of life, but to develop an intimate understanding of the United States as a powerful ally during the Cold War.

[6] Ibid., 44.
[7] Ibid., 40.

If these photographs focused on representing idealized forms of American everyday life for global consumption, Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man*, the main subject of this chapter, approached the subject of everyday life differently. While exhibitions such as *Amerika* tended to reify American way of life as a socio-economic standard which the rest of the world should strive for, *The Family of Man* attempted to capture the universality of everyday life for all of humanity. As Steichen himself claimed, "The camera [tells the truth] in the most universal language of all—in terms of birth, death, love, children, work, play, pleasure and pain, fears and hopes, tears and laughter."[8] The original MoMA exhibition in New York consisted of 503 photographs taken by 273 photographers from 68 countries, and eventually went on to be seen by 9 million exhibition-goers in 37 countries [Figure 35]. The exhibition's international tour was funded by USIS. To this day, it is the most successful photographic exhibition of all time. (The book version of the exhibition was published the same year and has never been out of print.)

Figure 35. The Family of Man *in New York's MoMA (1955)*
Source: Ezra Stoller

Despite the exhibit's enthusiastic public reception throughout the world, it has been met over the years with open hostility by some critics for its ahistoricity, unabashedly populist sensibility, and its attempt to dissolve away enduring problems of race, gender, and class. Roland

[8] Steichen, "Introduction."

Barthes in his famous critique lamented that by focusing so much on universality, the exhibit had failed to ask more pressing historical, structural questions about the human condition.[9] Dwight MacDonald called it the epitome of "Midcult," his pejorative term for "middlebrow," and that it offered sentimental existential assurances to a non-critical and passive audience.[10] Allan Sekula mounted one of the more often-cited critiques of the exhibit, that it was as an instrument of neo-colonial ideological assimilation, and functioned as a way to privilege and naturalize the institution of the heteronormative, nuclear family.[11]

Two recent scholars—Fred Turner and Blake Stimson—have produced nuanced works in attempts to rehabilitate the Steichen's historical significance. Turner wishes to "illuminate a deeply democratic, even utopian, impulse" of the exhibit, whose special virtue lay in the "modes of attention it solicited from visitors."[12] During wartime mobilization of the Second World War, the propaganda apparatus of fascist nations attempted to bombard the sensory faculties of its citizenry into passive obedience.[13] By contrast, Turner argues, the curatorial design of *The Family of Man* privileged individual choice by producing a media environment in which viewers were encouraged to "focus on the pictures that were most meaningful to them."[14] If Turner

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[9] Roland Barthes, "The Great Family of Man," *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers, (New York: The Noonday Press, 1991), 100-103.

[10] MacDonald writes that "The Midcult aspires toward Universality above all." His assessment of the Steichen exhibit teems with blithe contempt: "The editorializing was insistent—the Midcult audience always wants to be Told—and the photographs were marshaled to demonstrate that although there are real Problems (death, for instance), it's a pretty good old world after all." See Dwight MacDonald, *Masscult and Midcult: Essays Against the American Grain*, (New York: The New York Review of Books, 2011), 42.

[11] Allan Sekula, "The Traffic in Photographs," *Art Journal* 41, no. 1, (Spring, 1981): 19-20.

[12] Fred Turner, "*The Family of Man* and the Politics of Attention in Cold War America," *Public Culture* 24, no. 1 (2012): 57.

[13] If "authoritarian mass media," as Horkeimer argued, "offered broken individual psyches of fascist nations new personality patterns to imitate," then the media in the United States would help provide "democratic unity" while allowing viewers to reach out to the images, "selecting, arranging, and integrating them in their minds into their own individual gestalts." Turner acknowledges that the goal was not boundless freedom: the government would "set a principled framework" within which citizens would make "their own choices." The historical value of Steichen's contribution, for Turner, is that his "holistic, individualistic, utopian vision" set the stage for the "countercultural outbursts" to come in the later decades. See Turner, "*The Family of Man*," 63-84.

[14] Ibid., 57.

focuses on how Steichen-designed media environment would cultivate the construction of a "democratic personality," then Stimson's work emphasizes the series of dis-identification and re-identification that must have occurred midst the exhibit. In this gap—"the empty spaces between the photographs"—one would experience "the loss of identity before it is regained."[15] For Stimson, this "new, dispersed social subject" interpellated by *The Family of Man* was "antipolitical in its primary emphases but not yet fully individualist, consumerist, or smug in its neoliberal, global Americanism."[16]

While Stimson and Turner's analyses of the exhibit go beyond privileging Steichen's own intention to discuss the effect of the curatorial technology on the experiences of the exhibit-goers, they are still primarily interested in what's going on *inside* the exhibition space. They are both interested in the empty spaces between the "images" and the "turns" where the forging of democratic sensibility and the negation of one's identity take place. By contrast, in this chapter, I am interested in moving the process of *The Family of Man*'s meaning-making *outside* of the exhibition space, to show how cultural actors in South Korea co-authored the meaning of the Steichen's photographs through the very process of publicity and promotion (thereby modifying Steichen's vision and USIS's appropriation and worldwide deployment of that vision), and in one remarkable case of a series of human-interest stories called "The Human Family," rewrote the universalist and sentimental rhetoric of the original exhibit.

In this chapter, I locate *The Family of Man*'s task of promoting a democratic, individualist sensibility on a continuum with USIS's "global information campaign," which I

[15] According to Stimson, The continuous experience of "letting go of one identification" was in stark contrast to Steichen's earlier exhibit *The Road to Victory,* which invited the viewer to identify with specific images more than others. ("I identify with the picture of the former and *not* that of the factory worker, the soldier, or the nurse—I have my place in the war machine and you have yours.") Blake Stimson, "Photographic Being and *The Family of Man*," *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 82-84.
[16] Ibid., 96.

introduced above. Both relied on overlapping visual regimes of enlightenment and consumption, which privileged an isolated, alienated, and individuated observer. And both are part-and-parcel of what I call the "visuality of postwar enlightenment." This model of visuality was distinct from totalitarian modes of mass visuality (as pointed out by Turner), which seeks to overwhelm and enslave the subject's rational faculties. By contrast, the visuality of postwar enlightenment requires a distance or a gap between the overseer and the subject being "loosely" manipulated.

We can find documentation of these gaps in a numerous photographs from the USIS archive. The preponderance of USIS photographs focusing on these moments of mass curiosity (whether in Belgrade or in Seoul) emphasizes people crowding eagerly around different forms of visual and textual information pre-selected by U.S. agencies. I read these archival documents not as proof of persuasion, but as evidence of institutional desire—that is, desire to stabilize these moments *as* moments of successful ideological indoctrination. This is the same sort of desire that reads "intent faces" into the expressions of crowds gathered around *Amerika*. It is the same sort of desire visible in the meta-photograph of a view from inside the USIS office [Figure 36], looking out through the window (and the inverted 'USIS' sign) at a small group of Koreans studying the "World News" bulletin board.

Figure 36. View from inside the USIS office window

This photograph of people looking at photographs captures the ideological contradiction and necessary anxiety inherent in the subject-position of the postwar enlightenment campaign's neo-colonial overseer. The overseer pre-selects the range of available visual and textual information, but the neo-colonial subjects remain "free" to select from what has been provided and conclude what they wish. This epistemic gap is necessary and requires maintenance from both sides. If it becomes too narrow, the promise of choice and freedom is revealed as a sham, and the model reverts back to fascist forms of coercive propaganda. If it becomes too wide, the mutually beneficial yet hierarchical (and therefore conflicted) relationship risks collapse. If USIS's meta-photographs can be read as symptoms of this anxiety produced by this epistemic gap, I will show in this chapter how both Steichen and USIS made considered attempts to bridge this gap (if not to close it entirely).

Another deficit of this form of visuality was that its interpellative techniques assumed the existence of an individuated, isolated subjects and their relationship to the object of contemplation or gaze. This model of visuality could not account for popular "structures of feeling"[17] of the postwar, informed by widespread conditions of grief, wanting, penury, dislocation, and moral panic in the wake of the Korean War. The 1957 series of human-interest stories in *Tonga Ilbo* called "The Human Family" (*In'gan'gajok*), while clearly influenced by *The Family of Man* (Steichen's exhibit was also called *In'gan'gajok* in Seoul), functioned as a spectacle of intimacy that articulated another kind of affective rhetoric for its popular appeal. Instead of summoning an individuated, isolated, and contemplative subject, it invoked a readership opened to reciprocity, proximity, participation, and bodily communion.

In short, this chapter addresses the question of "what" and "how" regarding the deployment of the very idea of "universal everydayness." The *what* comprised the photographic

[17] See Chapter 4 for a discussion of how Raymond Williams's term has evolved.

content of Steichen's exhibit; the *how* relied on the model of an isolated, individuated spectator of mass visuality for the circulation of this content. Both factors were consequences of the rendering of everyday life as a reified form of global standardization and spectacle. The chapter begins with how South Korean writers, critics, and the popular press began co-writing the meaning of Steichen's exhibit, thereby framing *The Family of Man* as an intermedial event that served as a point of convergence for multiple assumptions and interests, both ideological and aesthetic. (That is to say, from very early on, the *what* of Steichen's "universal everydayness" was co-authored.) The second section reads *The Family of Man* as symptomatic of anxiety over the postwar atomic age. Despite its numerous photographs, ostensibly open format, and appeal to feelings and sentiment, its curatorial ideology was undergirded by enlightenment principles: humanism and rational action. This was an attempt to reign in a sense of apprehensiveness and neurosis that the atomic attacks in Japan and experiments with the hydrogen bomb had unleashed globally. Meanwhile, postwar literary works in South Korea were thinking through the relationship between mass visuality and moral agency. I will point to revealing instances in literary works where the solipsistic dimension of this form of mediated experience is related to nihilism, *ressentiment*, and madness, thereby underscoring the ways in which the underlying conditions of mass visuality (and exhibitions such as *The Family of Man*) was being contested. In the third section, the chapter moves beyond the elite-cultural discursive domain of critics, authors, and artistic photographers to look at popular sentiment and the ways in which *Tonga Ilbo* "Human Family" re-wrote the universalist rhetoric of *The Family of Man,* compensating for the techniques of isolation and individuation. In the final section, I will explore ways in which Steichen and USIS attempted to close the gap stemming from the alienation of the neo-colonial overseer from the observer's encounter with the spectacle.

Initial Coverage of *The Family of Man* in South Korea

Even prior to its arrival to Kyŏngbok Palace as "In'gan'gajok," Steichen's 1955 MoMA exhibition was covered by South Korea's major dailies. *Chosŏn Ilbo* began publishing select photographs from the exhibition, accompanied by short commentary without bylines.[18] The article titles (e.g. "Childhood Innocence," "Hard Work," "Mother's Love") acted as de facto titles for the photos, underscoring the images' abstract, philosophical valence over their concrete indexicality. Most writers were actively sympathetic to Steichen's universalist rhetoric. For example, one writer commented in response to Manuel Alvarez Bravo's photo of a pregnant woman, "A person's family is the most immediate, intimate and fundamental unit among all of society, history and creation."[19] Barbara Morgan's photo of a teenage girl playing a recorder inspired one writer to reflect on *hyangga* from the Silla Dynasty and how the "*saenghwal*" of Korean ancestors could be found in "the folk sentiment characterized by simplicity."[20] For this writer, Morgan's photograph managed to capture the sentimental life of all human beings across far reaches of time and space.

When the exhibition finally came to Seoul in April of 1957 [Figure 37], *Tonga Ilbo* took a similar approach by running a series of select photos under the heading, "The Family of Man: On-Paper Exhibition."[21] The captions were composed by photographer Yi Myŏngdong.

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[18] Eight photos were published in *Chosŏn Ilbo* from November 5th to November 13th: "Child in the Forest" (orig. title) by Wynn Bullock (US), "Mother's Love" (*moae*) by Elliott Erwitt (US), a photo of a pregnant woman by Manuel Álvarez Bravo (Mexico), "Childhood Innocence" (*tongsim*) depicting a joyful scene of children at play taken in Bechuanaland by Nat Farbman (US), "War" (*chŏnchaeng*) by Robet Jakobsen (US), "Hard Work" (*noryŏk*) by Jaokb Tuggener (Switzerland), "Survival" by Leopold Fisher (Austria), "Girl Playing Recorder" (orig. title) by Barbara Morgan (U.S.).

[19] "In'ganŭi kajok 2," *Chosŏn Ilbo*, November 3, 1956.

[20] "In'ganŭi kajok 9," *Chosŏn Ilbo*, November 13, 1956.

[21] Seven photos were published in *Tonga Ilbo* from April 5th to April 13th. Titles were composed specifically for the articles: "The Joy-Filled Birth Cry That Rings Through the Universe" by Wayne Miller (US), "The Sprouting of Hope: The Lovable Child" by Russell Lee (US), "The Vital Spark: Young Love," "Clear Eyes Prevail Over

According to a recent interview with Yi, he claims to have seen the series as "an opportunity to get the ordinary person to understand photography."[22] Because at the time in South Korea, photography was generally "looked down on" as an art form, Yi had hoped photography would become "easier to understand" and that it would help the general audience "recognize photography as a form of art."[23]

Figure 37. The Family of Man *in Seoul. The exhibit arrived in 1957, translated as* "in'gan'gajok," *人間家族 (lit. "Human Family")*

The exhibit's American origin, Yi felt, would confer it a level of artistic legitimacy, which would also elevate the status of photography in South Korea across the board. Yi's intention was to edify the South Korean public both on the cultural significance of photography and how it ought to be read. The decision to minimize his own role in the commentary (his authorship is simply marked with a single-character signature), then, may be understood as a way of strengthening the order of equivalence between the photograph and the explanatory text.[24]

Hardship" by Vito Fiorenza (Italy), "Hunger While Immersed in Thought" by Cas Oorthuys (Netherland), "Riding the Palpitating Melody of Youth" by Barbara Morgan (US), "Loneliness and Withdrawal" by Jerry Cooke (US).

[22] Ch'oe Pongnim and Yi Kyŏngmin, Transcript of an oral history conducted in 2010, "1950-1960nyŏndae sajin'gyeŭi hwaldonggwa pip'yŏng tamnon" [activities and critical discourse in photography during 1950-1960], *Han'guksajinsa kusulpŭrojekt'ŭ: 1945-1960nyŏndae sajin'gyeŭi hwaldonggwa tonghyang* [oral history of South Korean photography project: activities and tendencies in photography during 1945-1960] (Sŏul: Museum of Photography, 2010), 109, accessed April 14, 2017, http://www.photomuseum.or.kr/front/laboratoryPhotoProjectDetailView.do?no=5

[23] Ibid., 109.

[24] Yi was not alone in underscoring the self-explanatory value of photography, understanding the medium's communicative power that went beyond language. Kim Hanyong, another major photographer from the era said

While Yi might have been motivated by local and professional interests, his commentary meshed well with Steichen's overall design. Regarding Morgan's photo of the recorder-playing girl mentioned above, Yi writes, "Let us take each other's hand. Let us play the flute [sic], sing together in a robust chorus, our breasts pressed against one another and prevail over agony and sadness. Let the family of man live on in a spirit of one." In nearly every commentary, the idea of the global family is summoned as a magical solution for conflicts of race, gender, class, and nation in harmonious reconciliation, even if it means relying on banal sentimentality: "Love can prevail over any obstacle"[25] or "Aren't their eyes all the more luminous because of the agony they've suffered?"[26] Jerry's Cooke's photograph, for example, depicts a woman seated alone on a large bench indoors, her head buried between her knees. It is read to represent the agony of loneliness as a universal human condition, with no mention of the fact that the photograph was taken at the Ohio Insane Asylum (no mention was made in Steichen's exhibit either). While this institutional context would remain veiled, two photos taken in Korea by Margaret Bourke-White would be subject to curatorial intervention precisely because their perceived historical content was deemed to hold potentially incendiary significance.[27] Bourke-White's photos depicted women in funereal clothing wailing over a coffin in the aftermath of the Yŏsu-Sunch'ŏn

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regarding *The Family of Man*, "So this is what photography is. You see the whole process, from birth to death, there was no such thing as race or nation, the world was just one family. Whether you were black, white, or yellow, it would show what a human being was. Photography doesn't need language. Right? You look and feel. You feel without words. It's not difficult at all. So it left me with a profound impression. I read the book version too, *The Family of Man*, which I revisited repeatedly." See Yi Kyŏngmin, Transcript of an oral history conducted in 2009, "Han'guk sajingyeŭi imojŏmo" [remarks on South Korean photography], *Han'guksajinsa kusulpŭrojekt'ŭ: Kim Hanyong* [oral history of South Korean photography project: Kim Hanyong] (Sŏul: Museum of Photography, 2010), April 14, 2017, http://www.photomuseum.or.kr/front/laborataryPhotoProjectDetailView.do?no=482.

[25] Yi Myŏngdong, "The Vital Spark: Young Love," *Tonga Ilbo*, April 7, 1957.

[26] Yi Myŏngdong, "Clear Eyes of Victory Over Hardship," *Tonga Ilbo*, April 9, 1957.

[27] Ch'oe Pongnim and Yi Kyŏngmin, Transcript of an oral history conducted in 2009, "1950nyŏndae huban sinsŏnhoeŭi chojikkwa hwaldong" [sinsŏnhoe's organization and activities in the late-1950s], *Han'guksajinsa kusulpŭrojekt'ŭ: 1945-1960nyŏndae sajin'gyeŭi hwaldonggwa tonghyang* [oral history of South Korean photography project: activities and tendencies in photography during 1945-1960] (Sŏul: Museum of Photography, 2010), 84, accessed April 14, 2017, http://www.photomuseum.or.kr/front/laborataryPhotoProjectDetailView.do?no=5

Rebellion, a 1948 uprising in the southwest that was violently suppressed by the fledgling Syngman Rhee regime. South Korean photographer Yi Ansun's "Woman Praying to Buddha," was included instead.

Chosŏn Ilbo's "Meandering Thoughts (*susang*) to Send to *The Family of Man*" took an approach quite different from the ones we have so far seen. If *Tonga Ilbo*'s "On-Paper Exhibit" functioned as a photo exhibition reformatted to better suit the medium of the news daily, then "Meandering Thoughts" functioned self-consciously as a response within an imagined conversation with the original exhibition. Writer Kim Kuyong's response to Wayne Miller's photo of childbirth segues into a short conversation he once had with a taxi driver who had decided to not have any more children.[28] The driver spoke of "scraping out" two pregnancies because it was better for the already living to survive than to have too many children to go on starving. Ku says it is unfortunately common how the "mystery of life" is tragically "stamped out." Novelist O Sangwŏn writes from the point-of-view of Manuel Alvarez Bravo's pregnant woman, adding details not visible in the photo.[29] "The fingers which once flowed with a smooth luster have turned coarse," he writes, "but even in this life of difficulty, new dreams, expectations of tomorrow rise with a fond wistfulness." Novelist Pak Yonggu describes the photo of the ironworker as a "small symbol of all human endeavor," then asks, "Am I the only one who sees this photograph this way?"[30]

The commentary of Kim, O and Pak all willfully produced a fissure between the image and text. Kim's conversation with the taxi driver introduces a socio-economic reality which the photograph cannot account for. By emphasizing how bleak social conditions force people into

[28] Kim Kuyong, "On Birth," *Chosŏn Ilbo*, April 23, 1957.
[29] O Sangw*ŏn*, *Chosŏn Ilbo*, April 20, 1957.
[30] Pak Yonggu, "Work," *Chosŏn Ilbo*, April 24, 1957.

dehumanizing moral calculations, Kim undermines the humanist message of Steichen's exhibit.[31] O's flourishes provides literary supplementation to the photograph's visual rhetoric. Finally, Pak seems to follow the universalist script seen in the earlier responses, until he introduces doubt ("Am I the only one?") by underscoring the subjectivity of his own interpretation. In addition to the byline of each responder emphasizing the subjectivity of each response, the very diversity produced in the format further reinforces the notion that photographs can be read in different ways.

Finally, poet Chŏn Pongkŏn's response to the "Child Playing the Flute" in *Chosŏn Ilbo* deserves sustained attention for the vividness with which he describes the first-hand experience of the exhibition space.[32]

> There was some writing on white paper by the photo which appeared to offer an explanation, but in order to actually read the thing, you would've needed to engage hand-to-hand combat with the crowd which was rushing towards you like a flood. But this one photo particularly captured my interest. When I moved from one room to another, I came face-to-face with the photo over the audience's shoulders, between their legs, and under their armpits… Some were small, some even smaller, and some were quite large and others would be even larger than that… This photography exhibit was not simply an accumulation of pictures taken randomly with camera technology, but consisted of a design meant to capture the truth about human life (*saenghwal*)… The collective of humanity, through the affinity of a single family, is speaking to each other, foreheads touching. Drinking, romancing, giving birth, collapsing on a battle field, working in the fields… "This is how everyone in the world lives."

While Chŏn's reading of the exhibit eventually converges with Steichen's vision (for Chŏn and Steichen both, these photographs successfully captures the "truth of human life" or "the everydayness of life"), I am more interested in how Chŏn describes the experience of the exhibition space prior to arriving at this conclusion. That is to say, before making this intellectual

[31] Kim Kuyong's conversation with the driver directly addresses the concern Roland Barthes raised in his critique of Steichen's Paris exhibition, writing, "What does the 'essence' of [childbirth] matter to us, compared to its modes which…are perfectly historical? Whether or not the child is born with ease or difficulty, whether or not his birth causes suffering to his mother, whether or not he is threatened by a high mortality rate, whether or not such and such a type of future is open to him: this is what your Exhibitions should be telling people, instead of an eternal lyricism of birth." See Barthes, "The Great Family of Man," 100-101.
[32] Chŏn Pongkŏn, "Child Playing the Flute," *Chosŏn Ilbo* April 22, 1957.

judgment, he spends the first half of the excerpt detailing his experience of chaos and confusion as he tries to focus on the explanatory label ("writing on white paper"), but he must battle with the crowd of visitors ("the audience's shoulders, between their legs, and under their armpits") for a clear line of sight. He is therefore unable to engage in a sustained contemplation with the objects of his gaze, whether it is a photograph or a "white paper," which summons his attention.

We see in Chŏn's implied "ideal" for how the exhibition ought to be experienced something akin to the framework offered by Herbert Bayer, an influential artistic polymath of Weimar period's Bauhaus school, who would go on to collaborate with Edward Steichen for his MoMA photographic exhibition *Road to Victory* (1942). Bayer's description of the observer is taking "charge of both the viewing process and the construction of [his psyche]"[33] [Figure 38].

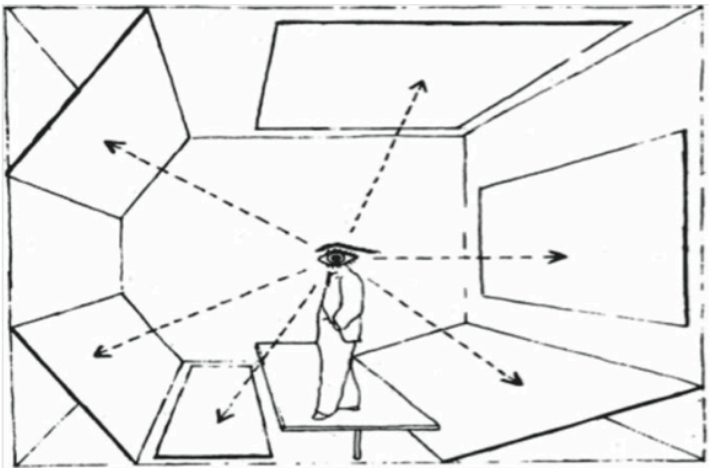

Figure 38. Herbert Bayer's "Diagram of 360 Degrees Field of Vision" (1935)

Yet what is elided from this description of "a picture of a man whose head [is] nothing but a giant eyeball"[34] is the vertiginous fullness of human contact from being midst a rowdy crowd. The disruption of the crowd that interrupts Chŏn's attempt to process the art object as an isolated observer leads to a slippage between the photographically represented bodies and the bodies present at the exhibition—a blurring of the line between spectacle and spectator. His account

[33] Bayer, "The Family of Man," 68.
[34] Ibid., 67.

provides a vivid sense of the bodily intimacy of the photographic encounter, the physicality of being part of the crowd, not unlike when one is negotiating the flow of human traffic in the street. As the intimacy of anonymous crowd at the exhibition blends with the intimacy of the anonymous bodies in the photograph, what is invoked is a carnivalesque atmosphere, which exists in tension with a desire for an isolated, contemplative subjectivity.

I am reading Chŏn's account of *The Family of Man* against the grain to call attention to a particular model of spectatorship (akin to Bayer's) that was being tacitly privileged, not just by this particular poet, but by the broader creative and intellectual class of the period. We can go further still by linking Bayer's paradigm of spectatorial visuality with a contemporary image published in a popular photography magazine called *Sajinmunhwa* [Figure 39].[35]

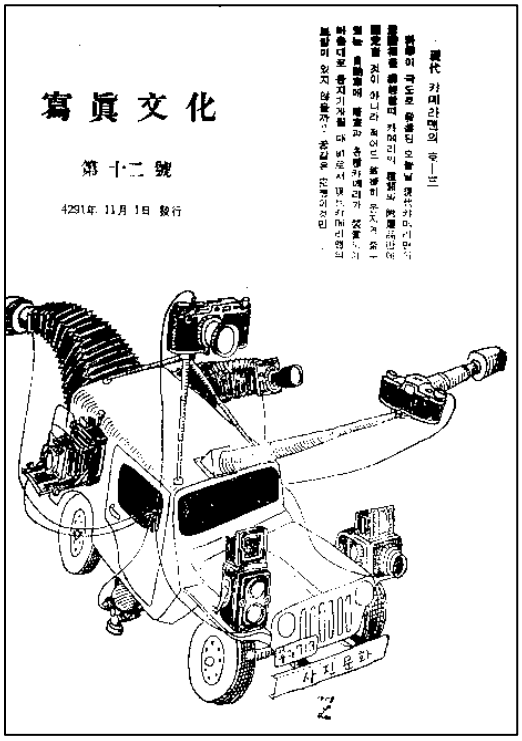

Figure 39. The camera-car. The fusing together of the automobile and the camera embodied a form of utopic innervation particular to fantasies about a personalized visuality and mobility.
Source: *Sajinmunhwa*

[35] "Hyŏndae k'ameraŭi ho-p'ŭ" [hope for the modern camera], *Sajinmunhwa*, November 1958.

This fanciful illustration depicts an automobile decked out with numerous cameras pointing in every direction. Hence the 360-view of Bayer's "giant eyeball" is replicated through the encircling camera attachments, and the automobile, with its blacked-out windows, doubles as a kind of dark room with an engine, isolated from the outside world except through the detached, objective mediation of the camera eye. Han Sang Kim has recently used the term "my car modernity" to describe American cinema's effect on South Korean perception of freedom and "self-determined mobility," which he then goes on to link with the idealization of a "car-owning nuclear family" and increasing atomization of society into family units over the postwar decades.[36] By calling attention to this illustration, I show the continuity of spectatorial visuality between inside the exhibition space and outside of it, during my car modernity's incipient years of emergence. Inside the black box, the isolated, individuated, ever-mobile subjectivity was in the process of being "developed." It is worth bearing in mind that the illustration of the camera-enhanced automobile was meant to be an aspirational expression, one fanciful realization of utopic innervation that technological and economic progress might bring. During this period, of course, more pessimistic models of the isolated observer abounded, un-enhanced by cars or cameras, floating aimlessly around the city without work, hope, or ambition. To such an observer, the condition of isolation would have been an affective burden rather than a pre-condition for liberal-consumerist innervation.

In the following two sections, I explore ways in which literary works were addressing the relationship between the isolated, disaffected (masculine) subjects and technically-mediated forms of visuality, thereby situating these works alongside *The Family of Man* as

[36]For Kim, the shift to "my car modernity" is a shift from "locomotive modernity" from the period of colonial mobilization, which had privileged "collectivity in motion and vision," "centralizing movement," and "stability." By contrast, U.S. propaganda films "showed a liberated and unlimited mobility through privately owned cars." See Han Sang Kim, "My Car Modernity: What the U.S. Army Brought to the South Korean Cinematic Imagination about Modern Mobility," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 75, No. 1 (February), 2016: 75-76.

contemporaneous attempts to address neurosis and anxiety about mass visuality in the nuclear age. Broadly speaking, the first section emphasizes the various ways in which a technically-mediated visual apparatus was re-mediated into literary figuration, that is to say, the significance of a piece of technology symbolically re-configured towards differing ideological and aesthetic ends. (To make this case, I refer to the portable stereoscopic viewing device *yojigyŏng*.) The second section extends this discussion to representations of isolated subjectivity verging on madness under the burden of excessive stimuli. This form of mass visuality—which privileges apocalyptic destruction as a consequence of punitive moral action—was unmistakably shaped by the visuality of mass destruction inaugurated by American deployment of atomic weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Case of *Yojigyŏng*: Isolation, Moral Agency, Technically-Mediated Visuality

In Yi Pŏmsŏn's canonical short story "Stray Bullet" (1959), the act of looking into a *yojigyŏng* appears as an organizing trope in a climactic monologue by the protagonist's younger brother, Yŏngho. The story is about a family of refugees from North Korea struggling to make ends meet in South Korea after the war.[37] Yŏngho is fed up with the impoverished conditions of the family's everyday life, and criticizes his older brother for stubbornly insisting on a morally upright existence. (The monologue comes just before Yŏngho tries to rob a bank.)

> I know about that kind of attitude towards everyday life (*saenghwal*) very well. Let's live a clean, virtuous life, even if we're poor, right? It's good to stay clean… If life were a *yojigyŏng* they show snot-nosed kids in the alleyway for ten *hwan*, you could look for as long as you've got money for and just call it a day. But your life isn't like a *yojigyŏng*... You have to keep living even if you don't want to… If you have to go on living, you need money. The money is necessary, so you find it. So why can't we go beyond the borders of what is legal? Who says we can't? Others cast aside the boundaries of legality as if the

[37] Yi Pŏmsŏn, "Obalt'an" [stray bullet], *Hyŏndae munhak* 58*,* October 1959, 138-166.

> line didn't exist, why do we have to suffocate in this cramped, fenced-in space of our conscience?[38]

The trope of the *yojigyŏng* animates the contrast between spectacle and real life. For Yŏngho, spectacle provides a consumable, escapist fantasy, which you can leave behind once your money runs out. But life goes on, demanding your participation, whether you have the money for it or not, like a nightmarish prison. Yŏngho uses this contrast to justify his extralegal and extramoral action, to will his subjectivity beyond "boundaries of legality" and the "cramped, fenced-in space" of his conscience. But the pursuit of this Nietzschean impulse goes nowhere; the heist fails and he is ultimately captured.

First, on a terminological level, the word *yojigyŏng* was often used metaphorically in the popular press to describe a public or publicized phenomenon that was "strange" or "bewildering." It served, then, a tautological, self-justifying function, labeling something already in the newspaper *as* newsworthy. But rather than offering socially or politically useful information, what *yojigyŏng* was serving up was strangeness or spectacle, available for consumption.[39] Second, as a physical device, *yojigyŏng* produced various forms of use that took on social and spectatorial forms, underscoring the attractive potential of technological commodities, not only to provide spectacles at the level of content but also *become* spectacles in their own right. For example, it became a common trope or metonym for instrumentalized or developmental

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[38] Ibid., 151.

[39] Genealogically, we may trace this form to the emergence of mass culture in Korea and Japan back to the 1920s and 1930s. Within the Korean context, Kim Yerim has shown how "the expansion of knowledge and cultivation" accompanied the "increasing popularization" of certain "collective sensibilities and tastes." Journals like *Pyŏlgŏngon* (a publication whose very title frames "a curio" or "a rarity" as an object of spectacular delight) made spectacles of "erotic, nonsense and grotesque" as an object of everyday consumption. In the same vein, Miriam Silverberg has pointed out how origins of mass consumerist decadence emerged in the years of reconstruction following the Kanto earthquake in 1923: "proliferation of [bars, cafés, tearooms], the rapid growth of street buses and suburban railways…the growth of department stores and modern offices that emerged to take hold of, to recreate, and to create a new cultural practice of everyday order." See Kim Ye-rim, *Modern Episteme and Aesthetic Consciousness in the late-1930s* (Sŏul: Somyŏng Ch'ulpansa, 2004), 261-263; Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic, Grotesque, Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 29. See Introduction for a more detailed discussion.

modernity in literature. Furthermore, the actual practice of looking through the *yojigyŏng* produced meta-spectacles, as evidenced by numerous street photographs of people looking through the device, usually in groups, producing different forms of intimacy. Sometimes the device organizes collective isolation, in which individuals separate themselves into their respective spectacles. Sometimes, the device encourages friendly competition and jealousy.

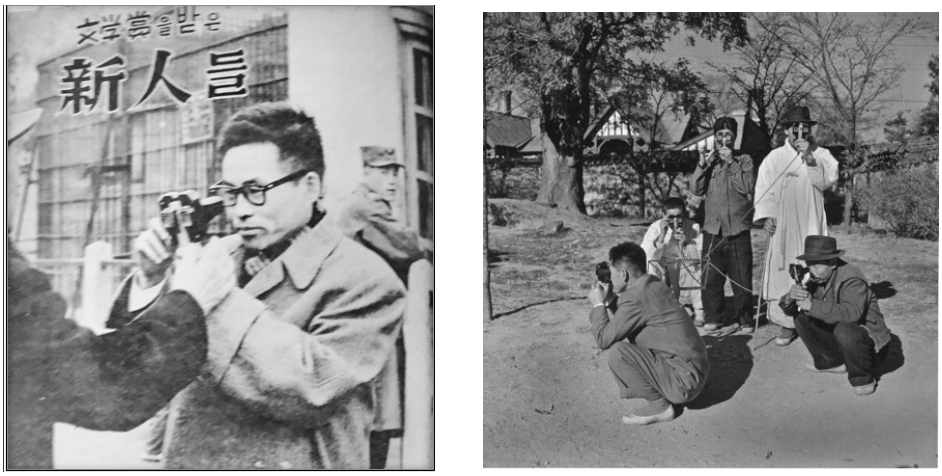

Figure 40. Yojigyŏng in the 1950. Ch'u Sik (left) poses with a yojigyŏng in a magazine pictorial profiling recent winners of literary prizes. This shoot suggests that the yojigyŏng *scene from "Discharged from Humanity" was memorable to general readers. Portable yojigyŏng were a common sight of vernacular street culture in the 1950s. Many photographers, including Kim Hanyong (right), were drawn to it as a photogenic site of public spectacle.*

In Ch'u Sik's short story "Discharged from Humanity" (1957),[40] the protagonist Pak Myŏngch'ŏl is disaffected former soldier who is unemployed and spends the vast majority of the story roaming around Seoul. Ch'u stages a memorable scene in the middle in which Pak encounters an old man wielding a *yojigyŏng* [Figure 40].[41] The old man, who is the only character whom the protagonist seems to regard with any kind of warmth, offers "tours" to different attractions throughout the world such as Niagara Falls, Venice, and Hong Kong, providing oral explanations to supplement the images as his customers look through the device. When another young man comes along and asks if he can use the contraption to look at pictures

[40] Ch'u Sik, "In'ganjedae" [discharged from humanity], 112-129.
[41] This element of the story was memorable enough to inspire a photo-op in which Ch'u himself posed with a *yojigyŏng* in an author pictorial, published in the monthly magazine *Hyŏndae*.

of naked women, the old man replies, "I don't have anything like that. This was made to cultivate the sensibilities of children."[42] The old man employs the device, then, towards enlightenment and betterment, rather than consumption and titillation.

I read the character of the gentle, educated older man who supplements the technological apparatus as a sanitized and displaced re-incarnation of the colonial-period *pyŏnsa* from the silent-film era. The older man is "sanitized" in that he is deliberately rendered wholesome; by contrast, the figure of the *pyŏnsa*, despite his massive popular appeal, was portrayed consistently during the silent-film era and the decades that followed as vulgar, irresponsible, uneducated, jeopardizing the film's potential to be deployed effectively for mass enlightenment. Yet a *pyŏnsa*-like figure is needed at this moment to supplement the *yojigyŏng* to produce an *interpersonal* spectacle of intimacy. This way, the phenomenon of mass spectatorship associated with cinema and large-scale exhibitions can be bracketed, emphasizing, instead, a more personalized and intersubjective vision of how information about the world can be distributed and digested.

We can see this paradigm as an vernacular adaptation of the "global information campaign" (mentioned at the start of this chapter) deployed by USIS through photography. The old man is portrayed as being equally comfortable with traditional and modern knowledge. He quotes from *The Analects* and Mencius, while providing his opinions on nuclear power and the geopolitical implications of the military base in Saudi Arabia.[43] In other words, he embodies a glimpse of a postwar audio-visual enlightenment subject that is balanced and humanistic, forward-looking without being cut off from the past, global in orientation yet locally grounded, and enhanced by technology without being alienated and supplanted by it. In "Discharged from

[42] Ch'u Sik, "In'ganjedae," 117.
[43] Ch'u Sik, "Discharged from Humanity," 117-118.

Humanity," then, what we see how the device *yojigyŏng* can be reconfigured towards cultivating a humanistic, vernacular sensibility meant to rehabilitate the dehumanized postwar subject (in the figure of Pak).

As it turns out, this humanizing moment is not enough to save Pak. Within the parameters of the story set by author Ch'u, our protagonist was already beyond redemption when the story began; by the story's conclusion when he has returned home to find his wife lying lifelessly on the floor, readers learn that Pak himself is probably the culprit. The meaning of title "Discharged from Humanity" comes into sharper relief, then; it is Pak's murdering of his wife that has banished him from humanity. Still, it is worth noting that until this final reveal, Ch'u Sik makes a concerted effort throughout the story to portray Pak as emblematic of the postwar everyman. His attitudes and thoughts as he wanders through the streets are withdrawn yet wistful. He is frustrated, alienated, and without hope, and yet is driven forward by fleeting moments of belonging he finds in the urban throng. In this sense, Pak is the quintessential postwar flâneur. In stark contrast to the post-liberation flâneur of streetscape-reportage discussed in Chapter 1, who drew from modernist aesthetic and realist ethos, the postwar flâneur is often characterized by cynicism, nihilism, and toxic *ressentiment*.

> Everything was more or less the same in the streets. It didn't matter what you had been doing at home. Such trivial matters didn't matter as everyone was rushing forward. I forgot about everything too and made my way to the third-class waiting room in Seoul Station… No matter how much I studied the people in line, they didn't look familiar. Yet it still saddened me to leave them. It filled me with sorrow to think that I was meant to be going with them, but that I couldn't go along and was falling by the way side.[44]

The passage describes well the oscillation between the feeling of alienation and belonging that characterize one's solitary journey through the city streets. The people in line at Seoul Station look "unfamiliar" and yet it fills Pak with sorrow to think he would not be joining them. When

[44] Ibid., 114.

he finally reaches Pagoda Park, he feels a greater sense of belonging among his "fellow brothers in arms" (*chŏnu*), who are wandering the streets jobless much like Pak himself.

After encountering a variety of unedifying spectacles (one of which is a crowd of job-applicants climbing telephone poles for a job), Pak comes across what he calls a "strange poster," which he had previously seen posted all around Seoul. "It's called "The Family of Man." It says 2.7 billion people throughout the world belong to one family. I couldn't understand this at all. My wife and I are a family of two, and we're at each other's throats like sworn enemies, so what are they talking about? Are they saying that everyone in the world can be a family, but my wife and I've been left out?"[45]

One of Edward Steichen's goals had been to argue for the need for global peace using the trope of the human family. As I showed in the previous section, the message was both successfully communicated and well-received by South Korean critics and commentators. In the case of Ch'u Sik's story, however, Pak's response (as well as the ultimate fate of his wife) undercuts the validity of Steichen's pronatalist ideology—the naturalized bond between husband and wife—which was highlighted time and time again throughout the exhibit under the mantra, "We two form a multitude."[46]

Both Ch'u Sik and Yi Pŏmsŏn's characters offer a form of frustrated masculinity we have discussed in the literary works discussed in Chapter 2. What differentiates these two characters from the previous examples is the extent to which their poverty, isolation, and *ressentiment* feed their transgressive urges, whether it means murdering one's wife or robbing a bank. Postwar immiseration and social alienation have led to the collapse of moral agency. In the case of

[45] Ibid., 126.
[46] In the book version of the exhibition, the theme is repeated seven times across a two-page spread, appearing as captions below portrait-type photographs of couples from Germany, Canada, Holland, China, etc. See *Family of Man*, 182-183.

"Discharged from Humanity," spectacles of various kinds dot the story, such as men lining up for jobs around Seoul Station, flyers advertising *The Family of Man*, or the old man with the *yojigyŏng.* It is only this old man with the *yojigyŏng* who seems to have any capacity to offer some glimpse of moral rehabilitation, but by the end of the story, we see that Pak was already beyond redemption. In "Stray Bullet," the story offers no potential for moral awakening or hope. While Yŏngho's differentiation between escapism and reality has the potential to prime him as a socially-engaged subject, Yi does not open the story up to such possibilities. Indeed, in Yu Hyŏnmok's 1960 film adaptation of the story, Yŏngho's cowardly selfishness is brought into sharper relief in a protracted chase scene after he robs the bank. He weaves into a crowd of protesters who are fighting together for better wages, and a tracking-shot stops to confront the group who stare right into the camera. From this throng, Yŏngho appears clutching his bag of money, underscoring the moral shortcut he has taken.

Postwar Atomization: Isolation and Spectatorship in the Nuclear Age

In the scene of "Discharged from Humanity" where the old man with the *yojigyŏng* casually demonstrates his knowledge of global state-of-affairs, he makes a reference to the productive potential of nuclear energy. Such a reference was neither representative nor exceptional. Looking across literary, popular, and political discourse shows that opinions, concerns, and musings on the subject of the nuclear age ran the gamut in the 1950s. As discussed in Chapter 2, Chang Yonghak saw the atomic bomb as inaugurating the era of myth as a way to justify his modernist shift away from naturalism. In an issue of an agricultural journal, a lazy farmer in a cartoon strip daydreams of a future miraculous technology from the nuclear age will help him increase production. Interestingly, the dread of nuclear annihilation was not a common

topic explored by South Korean writers and scholars of the period. Instead, the nuclear age was oriented towards scientific explanations, figured as an emblem of an epochal shift in the evolution of human history, or represented as a resource for economic growth and material abundance.

While nuclear annihilation was an apocalyptic specter looming over *The Family of Man* exhibition, it characteristically elided specificity and historical context. The MoMA exhibition in New York featured a "six-by-eight foot color transparency of test Mike, a thermonuclear explosion from Operation Ivy at Enewetak Atoll," which had been previously published in *Life* magazine in 1954.[47] John O'Brien writes that the accompanying *Life* article focused on "scientific nuclear discourse as opposed to discussion of the bomb's realpolitik instrumentality as a weapon."[48] O'Brien critiques the disturbingly "eschatological figuration" of *Life*'s description of the bomb, elaborating on the article's omission, for example, of information about the Japanese tuna fishing boat Lucky Dragon 5 that was "sprayed with radioactive ash from the thermonuclear test Bravo," despite having been "outside the officially demarcated danger zone."[49] In the same vein, *The Family of Man* approached the problem posed by the bomb abstractly, without any consideration of or acknowledgement of the destruction of human life it had already brought about. The exhibit went one step farther by positing a symbolic equivalence between the benefit and danger of "fire" as explained by a Sioux Indian proverb and the double-edged sword of "nuclear weapons and atomic electric power," as described by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission.[50]

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[47] John O'Brien, "The Nuclear Family of Man," *The Asia-Pacific Journal, Japan Focus* 6, issue 7, (July, 2008), 5.
[48] O'Brien goes on to explain how a Japanese tuna fishing boat was "sprayed with radioactive ash from the thermonuclear test Bravo," on March 1, 1954.
[49] Ibid., 5-6.
[50] The juxtaposition is reprinted in the book version: The Sioux Indian proverb states, "This is the fire that will help the generations to come if they use it in a sacred manner. But if they do not use it well, the fire will have the power to do them great harm," while the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission states, "Nuclear weapons and atomic electric

Despite the intriguing scarcity of literary sources dealing directly with the problem of nuclear weapons, I have identified in Yi Muyŏng's short stories "Heretic" (1955) and "Portrait of Madness" (1957) a sustained interest in the aesthetic of apocalyptic visuality. In both cases, the stories take a resolutely cynical approach towards the problem of social isolation, mass visuality, and the collapse of moral agency in the postwar years. As discussed in Chapter 2, Yi is best remembered in Korean literary history for his back-to-the-farmland (*kwi'nongch'on*) works. What makes these stories remarkable is Yi's sustained contemplation of the effect that mass-mediated sensorium has on one's moral and rational faculties, particularly through the staging of fantasized visions of destruction on an apocalyptic scale, which are technically-mediated. In "Heretic," the vision is brought on by watching an extended sequence of apocalyptic violence in a movie theater. The protagonist also finds himself wishing there were more televisions in South Korea so that the punishment he fantasizes for another theater-goer could be televised throughout the world. In "Portrait of Madness," Yi bypasses the technological limitations of the era by conjuring up a nearly omnipotent optical device that can see any guilty party and conjure him or her before the protagonist to be destroyed en masse. I will situate these stories—whose publication dates parallel *The Family of Man* exhibitions at the MoMA (1955) and Kyŏngbok Palace (1957) respectively—as constituting contemporaneous responses to the neurosis of the nuclear age.

"Heretic," (1955) published in *Hyŏndae Munhak*,[51] tells the story of a writer protagonist Chun, who spends the majority of the story inside a movie theater. Chun's frantic inner state is portrayed through interior monologue, capturing his response to the Hollywood blockbuster *Quo Vadis* (1951). Chun is overcome by excitement at the sight of Nero's destruction of Rome. He

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power are symbolic of the atomic age: On one side, frustration and world destruction: on the other, creativity and a common ground for peace and cooperation." See *The Family of Man*, 82.

[51] Yi Muyŏng, "Yidanja" [heretic], *Hyŏndae Munhak*, June 1955, 129-146.

undergoes a series of internal examination to try to find the moral ground for his excitement and realizes that he is not responding to any moral imperative but from the sheer visceral joy of witnessing Nero's destructive tyranny [Figure 41].[52] During the screening, Chun has a couple of vivid recollections that draw tantalizing connections between the technics of cinematic visuality and mass destruction.


Figure 41. Nero burns down Rome in Quo Vadis *(1951)*

First, he recalls how his own child had suffered from an infection in the cheek which needed to be cut out using a surgical knife. This becomes an analogy, in Chun's mind, for how the perceived "evil" of the glinting surgical knife as it cuts into the flesh of an innocent child, can act as "the good" that ultimately heals him. Yi writes, "the deep emotion [Chun] had felt [seeing the bloody pus spurt from the abscess] was what he was feeling now, watching the destruction of the Roman Empire, which had reached the height of civilization."[53] In the second memory, Chun thinks back to how, during the late colonial-period, the Japanese principal of the elementary school admired a B-29 soaring five-thousand meters in the air, describing it as having "an elegant beauty like a passenger ship floating on a sea of indigo." The principal then almost unconsciously shouts to Chun, "See how pretty, how beautiful it is!" Only afterwards realizing he'd spoken too freely to a "*senjin*" (Korean) student, he recants his declared admiration, "but

[52] Chun's fear of his own unconscious is plainly stated. "Of course this was all within his unconscious. That was the bigger problem. If instinct was something done without consciousness or judgment, then the emotional outburst that had popped out of his mouth must have been from pure instinct." Yi Muyŏng, "Yidanja," 130.
[53] Ibid., 131.

oh, how I despise it!"[54] It is revealed after Liberation that the principal had participated in an underground anti-imperialist movement in Suwŏn. Yi then makes the connection between this recollection and his present excitement in the theater explicit: "The Japanese principal's unconscious awe was akin to Chun's unconscious."[55]

Here, the terrifying beauty of technological modernity links the scalpel and the B-29. If the surgical knife can excise an infection with violence, B-29's potency lies not just in its power to cleanse through mass destruction, but through its truth-revealing power. The plane's "elegant beauty" is described as being endowed with a truth-telling power that can unveil the viewer's unconscious (or political orientation). The surgical knife can function both as a force of righteous destruction *and* a truth-unveiling device that cuts away falsehood. This reading is supported by a third memory which comes to him in the theater, in which Chun is stripped naked and tortured by a "pock-marked detective" under the Japanese occupation.[56] Chun submits to the pain, upon seeing his own flesh cut into strips. The torture delivers an indelible piece of self-knowledge: he is a traitor. This "truth" is not simply something extracted clinically but is in fact a new reality that is produced with the terrorizing violence of the surgical knife. The spectacle of mass destruction portrayed in *Quo Vadis* binds the scientific (surgical) and the aesthetic (sublime) visions.

Near the end of the movie-theater segment of "Heretic," Yi stages a striking scene in which Chun reacts angrily at a man who is disturbing other theater-goers by smoking a

[54] Ibid, 131-132.
[55] Ibid., 132.
[56] Ibid., 133.

cigarette.[57] Chun is at the height of his state of exhilaration from witnessing the destruction of Rome, when

> a screen of fog spread before him. First he thought it was a hallucination. But that wasn't it. There was a cloudiness to it, like an imperfection in a piece of jade. He searched through the screen to get to the bottom of what it was. It was definitely dimming the picture. The layer of fog made it impossible to get a vivid look of Rome being built back from scratch. Chun tried his darnedest to understand what it was. He searched the screen desperately. Nothing. He searched within his heart. Nothing. He looked inside his mind. Nothing. He looked again. There was nothing, nothing to be seen.[58]

The detail of this transgression is not insignificant within the history of cinema and spectatorship in South Korea; around this time, the Syngman Rhee regime passed several regulations to improve hygiene in public places of gathering, one of which was to ban smoking inside theaters.[59] This attempt to regulate the site of spectatorship was part-and-parcel of the overarching trajectory from the riotous, bustling, and participatory space of public intimacy and sociality to a domesticated space of self-composed, individuated spectators. Much like poet Chŏn Pongkŏn's attempt to concentrate on the photographs and the explanatory labels in *The Family of Man* exhibition through the unruly mob of spectators, Yi's protagonist is trying to immerse himself in the apocalyptic violence depicted on screen. What breaks this immersion is the strand of cigarette smoke that comes between Chun and the screen. The animus between Chun and the

[57] In Chun's view, the gravity of this transgression is comically exaggerated. The smoker is placed in the same lineage of evil as the notorious King Yŏnsan'gun and Hitler. Chun considers the man to be the embodiment of evil that caused nation liberated the Cairo Declaration and Potsdam Conference, into a wretched, divided nation. Yi Muyŏng, "Yidanja," 136.
[58] Ibid., 136.
[59] The through the press office, President Rhee declared, "Make sure moviegoers are not entering the theater for free, and employ the policy of designating seats. There should be no smoking inside the movie theater, and the restroom facilities should be kept clean." Yet the movie theaters complained that the practice of "seat designation" would decrease ticket-sales. By July 1956, most second and third-rate theaters do away with the practice of assigning seats. The implication here that demands of audience attraction and vernacular spectator culture carried enough weigh to push back against top-down desires to regulate and bring "order" to public spaces of gathering. See Kim Tongho et al., *Han'guk yŏnghwa chŏngch'aeksa* [history of South Korean film policy] (Sŏul: Nanam, 2005), 100.

smoker, then, emerges at a moment when the very sociality which is the pre-condition for that animus is dissolving away.[60]

The central irony of Chun's solipsistic interior monologue is the importance he places on visibility; the more he sinks into the irrational realm of self-righteous fantasy, the more outsized his desire for external recognition seems to become. For example, he imagines punishing the cigarette smoker by stripping him naked before the entire world.

> [Chun] had almost forgotten. He would have to take into account an apparatus that would allow for tens or hundreds of thousands of people to witness the spectacle. He considered Namsan. But unless everyone could line up according to height, not everyone could see… Wouldn't it be great if we had television in this country too? Then the whole world could sit around and watch.[61]

This fantasy of a public punishment turned into a televised spectacle is further developed in Yi's "Portrait of Madness," published two years later in the same journal, featuring the diary of Kwŏn, a professor who is accused of assaulting another man.[62] After being run off the road by a careless driver, Kwŏn attacks the culprit with an umbrella in a fit of anger, wounding the man's eye. By coincidence, the victim "M" happens to be romantically involved with the same young woman that Kwŏn is, so that he is accused of intentionally assaulting the man out of jealousy. Within this context, select sections from a "densely written 200-page diary" are presented to the reader as a window into Kwŏn's mind. In one section, Kwŏn recounts a dream in which (as we saw in "Heretic") he fantasizes about a sensational scene of public execution, but with a crucial

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[60] Yi's passage is also worth comparing to Blake Stimson's description of exhibition spectatorship. While the former deals with the experience of cinema while the latter with a photographic exhibition, both are interested in the moment of disorientation when the observer is de-linked from the object of one's gaze, or lifted out of one's immersive experience. For Stimson, "This conflict of experience for the beholder found its apogee not so much in the intensity of experience in front of an individual photograph or in the experience of a continuous flow carrying him along from one to the next and the next and the next, but instead in the empty spaces between photographs, at the pivot point where the beholder turns his body and his attention from one image to the next. At the center of this experience, where it achieved its greatest intensity, was the experience of identity as loss." See Stimson, "Photographic Being," 82.

[61] Ibid., 137.

[62] Yi Muyŏng, "Kwangsang" [portrait of madness] *Hyŏndae Munhak*, April-May 1957, 87-109, 123-149.

alteration; rather than have the whole world watching, it is Kwŏn who can watch over the whole world. In this dream, the protagonist is able to see, summon, and destroy anyone he pleases. In this way, Yi explicitly links visual omniscience with destructive omnipotence: seeing equals destroying.

> I made a magnificent discovery. It's truly magnificent. With this invention, from the comfort of where I'm sitting, I can look down at the entire universe. I've acquired a tremendous power. Whatever it is that I intend to do, I could do by pressing a button… I put on the glasses. These are the glasses that allow me to look at the entire world. I raised my eyes. I can see. 'That bastard who cut in line and got on the bus before everyone else. Bring him to me.' And there he was. It was truly a great power…[63]

The crimes of those he wants to punish vary in degrees of seriousness, including hypocrisy, corruption, careless driving and being communist.[64] After gathering everyone on the bank of Han River, all he has to do is press a button and "they'll all be reduced to ashes." At the last moment, he is stopped from carrying out the annihilation by a hand slapping him across the cheek, followed by the voice of Chiae (the woman whom both Kwŏn and M are involved with), who declares, "Here's a pot calling the kettle black!" Within the logic of the story, Chiae is the only character who is morally clean by the virtue of her family pedigree: her grandfather was a martyr for national independence and committed suicide on the day of Korea's annexation by Japan.

While Yi is obviously critical of modern forms of mass visuality and their disorienting provocations, the prose nonetheless exalts in the techniques of speed and montage that the telegraphing of ecstatic mental states calls for. There is also an earnest turn to the act of writing—not mechanically mediated production of print, but the practice of writing by hand—

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[63] Ibid., 136.

[64] Others include: "swarms of satin-skirts protesters complaining about how the country changed the principal," "guys who were in charge of the nation's rice and let it rot," "those using guns to seize power and political power," "those who work in customs who let people pass on a bribe," "those who take women on rides on cars meant for official and military use," "those who cut down young pine from the slopes of Chiri Mountain," "the driver who splashed water on the pedestrians as he drove past," "those who massacre the people for demanding liberty," "those who betray the spirit of the U.N. and only use their veto power," "Nikolai Bulganin, Mao Zedong, Kim Il Sung." See Yi Muyŏng, "Kwangsang,"136.

perhaps as a way of suggesting a mode of respite in the overwhelming sensorium of modern life. In "Heretic," for example, the story moves on beyond the movie-theater segment as Chun mulls over how to find reconciliation with a friend over borrowed money; it reaches an ambivalent end with Chun writing a letter to him, sealing it in an envelope and closing his eyes in contemplation. In "Portrait of Madness," the protagonist himself is rendered a textual object of moral and psychological scrutiny through the frame structure of the embedded diary. Within this conceit, the story's narrator, who has been reading about the case of Professor Kwŏn, announces near the conclusion that he is feeling faint, a sense of joy as if he is about to "ascend to heaven." He first links this sensation to being tipsy from drink, but he quickly differentiates this state. "Today's faintness isn't that kind," he claims. "Far from a kind of sleepiness, I feel like I'm waking up. It's the phenomenon of purification, as fresh water flows into a murky stream."[65] The narrator confesses that his father was "the embodiment of privilege during the Japanese occupation"; after liberation, it was only his family's privilege that allowed him to escape being labeled pro-Japanese. The articulation of a this new kind of consciousness should be considered alongside representations of sensorial disorientation and madness in "Heretic" and "Portrait of Madness," where one becomes vulnerable to fits of moral degeneracy and reckless violence. While the latter are linked with consumption of mass visuality by an isolated observer, the former is the result of sustained textual engagement. By vicariously experiencing Kwŏn's own soul-searching, the narrator/reader is able to achieve self-knowledge through confession which has a purifying and transformative effect on his consciousness. By linking this altered state as a kind of "ascension to heaven," it offers a sublimation of the desire for transcendence.

It is worth noting that Yi does not problematize the issue of psychological isolation itself. In both stories, Chun and Kwŏn exist at odds with the people around them. Chun's fantasized

[65] Ibid., 138.

spectacle of public punishment, whether it is meant for a fellow movie-goer or an international cast of Communist offenders is the product of a brooding and isolated imagination. The same could be said for Chun even when he sits down to write his letter to his estranged friend or the narrator of Kwŏn's predicament who achieves some degree of transformative self-reckoning. Whether one is seated in a theater screening a Hollywood film or in a room fussing over a conflicted professor's diary, what is privileged is a solitary, contemplative subject (who tends to be, at least in Yi's urban fiction, intellectuals such as professors or writers). This subject is both intellectualizing and moralizing, usually from a masculinist, post-colonial and anti-communist perspective. By exaggerating the psychological effects of isolation, Yi is able to underscore the limits of the sovereign subject. Indeed, even as Kwŏn's "magnificent invention" allows the fulfillment of what Foucault has called "one of the fundamental attributes of sovereign rule," which is the right "to take life and let live" (and even as the logistical problem posed by the "right of the blade" which only allows the sovereign to "introduce on life at the moment when he could take it away" is resolved with an all-seeing visual apparatus that can summon anyone at will) [66], Kwŏn's fantasy of sovereignty ends in chastening deflation. This critique of an all-powerful visuality, when read alongside Yi's images of cleansing conflagration found in "Heretic," can be seen as coping with the neurosis of the nuclear era.

Now we can situate Yi's stories alongside Steichen's exhibit as responding to a common anxiety about the postwar enlightenment moment. If, as Fred Turner claims, *The Family of Man* was designed to ask "visitors to practice the perceptual skills on which the development of democratic personalities—and thus the control of democratic societies—depended,"[67] it also undeniably contained top-down messages which were tendentiously wrought out of the

[66] Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and Education of Desire* (Durham: Duke University, 1995), 81.
[67] Turner, "The Family of Man," 83.

ostensibly open field of perceptual offerings. As Turner himself states regarding the exhibit's depiction of a hydrogen bomb explosion,

> Until this point in the exhibition, visitors could meander among an array of images; this picture of a hydrogen bomb exploding was a choke point, a single image that every viewer had to confront before moving on. For Steichen, the image clearly represented what might happen to the human race if individuals failed to recognize the qualities they shared. In 1955 America, the image also likely reminded American viewers that it was their country as much as or more than any other that was driving the atomic threat.[68]

The exhibition sought to appeal to the visual allegory of the global family drawing from the affective force of photography, but the argument, however sentimentally deployed, was ultimately a rationally-based ultimatum of species survival. We must get along, or else. If this reading of Steichen's line of rhetoric reveals the anxiety over the realpolitik logic of "nuclear diplomacy"[69] (a fundamental premise for the maintenance of Pax Americana in the postwar Pacific region), then the breathless, satirical excess in "Heretic" and "Portrait of Madness" testified to the failure of moral-and-political sovereignty based on spectacularized destruction, which Yi linked to conditions of isolation and social alienation produced by mass-mediated, technologized visuality.

Localizing The Sentimental Logic of Universality: *Tonga Ilbo's* "The Human Family"

The chapter has so far focused on South Korean engagement with *The Family of Man* by emphasizing the writing of critics, fiction writers, and poets engaging in cosmopolitan exchange

[68] Ibid., 80.

[69] Andrew Erdmann provides a concise overview of the extent to which nuclear weapons played a role in the negotiation of power among heads of state during the contentious years of the Cold War. Erdmann remarks how Eisenhower initially incorporated "as the pre-eminent component of American national security policy," but after 1955, he refrained from "nuclear signaling" in major international crises, becoming increasingly cautious about the expanding thermonuclear capabilities of the superpowers. This chapter, by contrast, has focused primarily on the effect of the nuclear age within civil society and the cultural imagination across the United States and South Korea. See Andrew P.N. Erdmann, "'War No Longer Has Any Logic Whatever': Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Thermonuclear Revolution," Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy Since 1945 (Oxford, 1999), 87-89.

by co-authoring the images of Steichen's exhibition or responding to shared anxiety about the looming threat of nuclear catastrophe. But there was an altogether different kind of response which comprised a medium-specific *adaptation* of the exhibit and was intended to appeal to the popular sentiment of the broader reading public. Two months after *The Family of Man*'s arrival in Seoul, *Tonga Ilbo* began running a series of human-interest stories called *In'gan'gajok* (the same title used for Steichen's Korea exhibit). The series was so popular that after its initial run, it was revived due to a torrent of requests by readers who wanted follow-ups on what had happened to the story's subjects. [70]

While the prologue to the series made no explicit mention of *The Family of Man*, it was clearly mimicking the inclusive, border-crossing, and universalist aspirations of the original photographic exhibit [Figure 42].

> *You are born, you give birth, then you die.* […] This may be the great common denominator of humanity or human beings (*in'gan*). […] Humankind's form of life (*sangt'ae*) contains countless variety—crying, laughing, deceiving, fighting, stealing, learning, loving, hating, eating, starving—therein lie human beings in their bare-fleshed form where there is no racial difference, national boundaries, hierarchy of status, sexual

[70] (1) June 29, 1957 "Murderous Love of a Mother": A single mother attempts double-suicide with her son whom she cannot feed; (2) June 30, 1957 "Orphans Who are Not Orphans": The problems faced by children of a convicted assassin; (3) July 1, 1957 "The Dear Wish of an International Couple": an American convicted for smuggling tries to escape deportation to stay with his Korean wife and children; (4) July 2, 1957 "Small Shop of Love": a young man sets up a store for an old woman he does not know to help her eke out a living; (5) July 3, 1957 "Resistance Through Death": a working woman commits suicide to bring public attention to exploitative social conditions; (6) July 4, 1957 "Naturalization Case #1": A Chinese family becomes naturalized Koreans; (7) July 6, 1957 "What is a Mother?": A child sues to dissolve her mother's right as a parent; (8) July 7, 1957 "A Youth Given to Incarceration": A woman incarcerated for treason but released early due to health reasons seeks to return to prison to serve the rest of her sentence; (9) July 8, 1957 "The Record of Rehabilitation: Korean Jean Valjean": An orphan turned criminal tries to rehabilitate himself; (10) July 10, 1957 "The History of a Downfall": A woman turns to prostitution to support her father and younger sibling; (11) July 11, 1957 "Orphan in the Front Lines": A soldier takes care of orphans; (12) July 13, 1957 "A Shard from a Broken Mirror": A woman is accused of vandalism for taking revenge on a husband who has taken another wife; (13) July 15, 1957 "The Ringleader's Position": The secret world of child gangs; (14-16) July 20, 1957 "International Household": An old woman living in poverty exchanges letters with her American daughter-in-law in the U.S. after her son's death; (17) July 23, 1957 "The Once Happy Times of a Family with One Husband and Five Wives": Polygamous marriage ends in group suicide; (18) July 28, 1957 "Vicissitude of Life": A once-famous dancer trained in Japan is forced to turn to prostitution; (19) July 29. 1957 "The Stirring of Rehabilitation": A severely injured boxer tries return to the ring (20) July 30, 1957 "Human Love That Transcends National Borders": A U.S. staff sergeant takes care of his Korean wife suffering from leprosy.

> discrimination.[71] The canvas of "The Human Family," with its diverse and colorful lives, brings together the exhibition space of social history. Through the window of these themes, let us draw…the image of a single mother's joy and sorrow, her love and hatred.

In one sense, this series was a continuing re-scripting of Steichen's exhibit that went on in the pages of *Tonga* and *Chosŏn Ilbo* discussed earlier this chapter. On the other hand, the series went beyond sampling, commentary and supplementation of the original by selecting new subjects and setting its own terms for how this "human family" would be organized and displayed for the readership. While continuing to draw from the logic of exhibition, it produced a very different kind of relationship with the reader/viewer that exceeded the obvious difference between visiting an open exhibition space and reading a human-interest article in a newspaper.

Figure 42. "The Human Family" in Tonga Ilbo. *The series used the format of popular press human-interest stories to appropriate the sentimentalizing rhetoric of Steichen's* The Family of Man.
Source: *Tonga Ilbo*

First, there was a specificity to the subject of the profile which was lacking in the exhibition of anonymous bodies in the photography exhibit. While Steichen's exhibit attempted

[71] Compare with *The Family of Man;* "The camera [tells the truth] in the most universal language of all—in terms of birth, death, love, children, work, play, pleasure and pain, fears and hopes, tears and laugher." One clear distinction between the two is that while Steichen seems to focus on *states*, "The Human Family" emphasizes *acts*. Verbs like "deceiving, fighting, stealing, hating" are particularly interesting because they delve into the realm of interpersonal conflict—which Steichen seems to shy away from. Steichen's darker themes, such as "death," "pain," "fear," and "tears," appear by contrast, static and contained, existing as universal conditions without any particular actors.

to universalize specific bodies through anonymity and de-contextualization, "The Human Family" provided specific individuals with name and personal biography. Many of the pieces drew overwhelming responses from the readers who claimed to identify with the plight of the subjects. They wrote letters and in several cases sought out the subjects in person. The newspaper medium became not simply a mode of exhibition and display, but also an opportunity for reciprocity, participation, and communion. While the aforementioned "meandering thoughts" which were "sent" to "The Family of Man" were likely left unread by Steichen, the letters that poured into *Tonga Ilbo* actually made their way to the subjects of "The Human Family." The room for intervention allowed the reader to step out of the role of mere spectator, endowing them with the agency to change the story's outcome. Furthermore, it produced a rupture in the series's *sinpa*-esque mode, in which a belief in fatalism trumps the spirit of self-determination.[72] A Hollywood-style "happy ending," however unlikely, seemed within the range of possibility. This allowed the reader to sustain their curiosity and return to the paper for updates. For example, the story about a thirty-year-old woman who attempted double-suicide with her young son only to survive alone, inspired "hundreds of requests from readers" who wanted *Tonga Ilbo* to report on what had happened to her afterwards. There was also the story of an American soldier convicted for smuggling and ordered to leave the country by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was described as a man "with 'Eastern-style affection'" who was devoted to his Korean wife. The readers sympathized with his plight in spite of his criminal past and "encouraged him to go on living in Korea." The paper claimed "this could be the approval of the citizens who are the true sovereigns of this land."[73]

[72] For more on *sinp'a* see Chapter 4.
[73] "The Dear Wish of an International Couple," *Tonga Ilbo*, July 1, 1957.

Second, while claiming to capture the whole of humanity, the tales focused primarily on Koreans; foreigners appeared most often as partners of "international marriages"—marriages between Koreans and non-Koreans—the emphasis placed on Koreanizing rather than foreignizing the non-Korean person. Four stories notably dealt with the idea of the so-called "international household" which reinforce the theme of humanist, transracial intimacy. These articles served as a precursor for a series of pieces that would appear in 1959 in *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*.[74] Of the four, two dealt with cases in which the male partner was a member of the U.S. Army. Interestingly, in both "Dear Wish of an International Couple" and "Human Love That Transcends National Borders," the American husbands who appear as protagonists are also revealed to be orphans.[75] Furthermore, their back stories are treated with the same melodramatic overtones as when dealing with Korean subjects. These parallels went beyond simply projecting Korean sensibilities on to non-Korean subjects. Indeed, they might have worked in tandem with ideological interests by reinforcing ideas of interracial and international fraternity between U.S. and South Korean allies during the Cold War. But there was a more fundamentally disruptive potentiality in this rhetoric that could subvert the regulatory logic of race and legality.

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[74] In *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*'s eight part series on "international households" published in January 4-11, 1959, they reversed the orientation of how Koreans might conceive of the so-called international marriage in two distinct but importantly related ways. First, they consciously shifted the focus of attention to foreigner females who were married to Korean men. (They kept to this rule except for one case in which Korean female was married to a Filipino male.) Second, while above-mentioned articles about U.S. soldiers and Korean women often involved imagining them *leaving* South Korea, most of the articles in the series focused on households that had not only settled in South Korea but were raising their mixed-blood children there. Within these parameters, the foreign women are repeatedly described as honorary Koreans ("she might as well be Korean"), though their cultural and linguistic fluency vary from case to case. Perhaps more interestingly, the children of these international households are always described in positive and glowing terms. None of the language of emotional defect (common in representations of mixed-raced Korean children during this period) find their way into the description of these children, though they are, technically speaking, just as "mixed-blood" as the orphans of U.S. soldiers and Korean mothers.

[75] Castler in "Dear Wish of an International Couple" (*Tonga Ilbo* July 1, 1957) was born in New York. "For some reason, his birth-mothers sent him off to an orphanage at age-two and he was raised by step parents." While he claims to feel gratitude towards his step parents, he does not have any lingering affection for his home country. Staff sergeant Kennedy in "Human Love That Transcends National Borders" (*Tonga Ilbo*, July 30, 1957) is described as having become an orphan when he was five years old.

For example, let us take the story of Pedro Castler (26) [76] who spent seven months in Korean prison for his role in "The International Watch Smuggling Incident." Castler was released on probation and ordered to leave the country by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ms. Hong (25), speaks in his defense, "If I had a beautiful face, he might have betrayed me… But he told me, 'You might not be very good looking but I found your beauty in your innocence.'." The reporter translates this statement: "In other words, she was saying that he was a man "endowed with 'Eastern-style affection'." The part describing the night when Castler learned of the deportation order is even more vividly melodramatic. "On that night, he did not sleep or eat; he only embraced his daughter with tears streaming down his face." As Castler prepared to return to the United States, he is purported to have taken dozens of photographs of his wife from multiple angles. The reasoning he provided was that if he returned to South Korea and could not find her whereabouts, then he would get different newspapers to publish those pictures so that he would be able to track her down. The article speculates that perhaps Castler was plagued with anxiety that she may change her mind about him. The photograph functions as doubly as an overlapping net of surveillance power and sentimental attachment that has the power to regulate Ms. Hong's behavior. By relying on the circulatory potential of the photograph as a medium, Castler hopes to "preserve" not only their relationship but her current feelings towards him.

The situation conjured in "Human Love That Transcends National Borders" is more unequivocally of the feel-good variety. Staff Sergeant Kennedy (32) was married to a Korean woman with two children. When he tried to move his family to the United States, he was met with complication; his wife O Sunch'ul (29) had contracted leprosy. Kennedy is portrayed as the ideal foreign husband, who admires Korea and has adopted Korean qualities: he is described as a "generous, kind and polite" person who is "researching Korean history"; he sees Korea as "an

[76] The precise Romanization of the subject's name could not be confirmed.

attractive country"; "He may be an American but he's many times better than a Korean gentleman"; "Even when he laughs, it seems like a Korean person laughing." After O's hospitalization, he goes to visit her by using the jeep on base; when the company commander instructed him not to "come in contact with the Korean person of color (*yusaek'in*)," he disobeys his commander and takes the bus instead, even when it means being demoted. Here, Kennedy references Jesus Christ's humble origin to say that Jesus taught not to discriminate between human beings.

In addition to the follow-up on Kennedy, eleven other articles appeared due to an overwhelming response from sympathetic readers.[77] The story about Cho Chinok (30) who attempted a double-suicide with her boy (12) only to survive alone, inspired "hundreds of requests from readers" who wanted *Tonga Ilbo* to report on what had happened to her afterwards. There is also the story of Castler who had been ordered to leave the country remains. Those who wrote to the paper sympathized despite his criminal past. The paper interprets this as "encouraging him to live in this country" and that "this may be the approval of the citizens who are the sovereigns of this land." Interestingly, the article also lists by name of people who have been writing to Castler personally. Ten people are identified by name and corresponding addresses.

Third, "The Human Family" was clearly interested in showing new possibilities for bonds of kinship even among the Korean people within the postwar context of national division

[77] The twelve follow-up articles were published immediately after the first twenty pieces ran to completion, from July 31st to August 22nd: (1) July 31, 1957: "Murderous Love of a Mother", (2) August 1, 1957: "Orphans Who are Not Orphans", (3) August 2, 1957: "Dear Wish of an International Couple", (4) August 3, 1957: "Small Shop of Love", (5) August 4, 1957: "Resistance Through Death", (6) August 6, 1957: "Fraternal Bond with a Lawyer" [story about the "Korean Jean Valjean"], (7) 1957.8.13 "International Household", (8) August 15, 1957: "I will Try Surviving on My Own" [The story about the injured boxer] (9) August 16, 1957: "Struggle for Divorce and a Shard of a Shattered Mirror" (10) August 17, 1957: "The Mother Who Won't Return" [the story about "Orphan in the Front Lines"] (11) August 19, 1957: "Human Love That Transcends National Borders" (12) August 22, 1957: "Naturalization Case #1"

which had brought so much familial separation, wanting, and mourning. “Small Shop of Love” describes how a young man who had to bid his own mother during the January 4th retreat decided to help Pyŏn Suni, an impoverished old woman in her seventies, by setting up a small shop for her to run. The follow-up details how a reader appeared describing herself as no different from the old woman, and donated two bottles of soy sauce and a can of *toenjang* and four sets of *chŏgori* and skirt. The article identifies the woman by name and address. In another instance, a woman in her forties stopped by and said, “Are you that old lady [in the article]?” and embraced Pyŏn and broke down in tears. “Even when Pyŏn asked her why she was crying, she did not answer and only continued to cry,” according to the article. “After about an hour of this, Pyŏn was eventually driven to tears herself without knowing why. After their tears, the woman untied the package she had brought and said, ‘It’s not much but please accept this.’ There were twelve articles of high to medium quality clothing.” The woman finally tells Pyŏn that “I am in the same situation as you.” The accompanying photograph shows Pyŏn holding the clothing that the anonymous woman left with her. In a similar vein, in “Fraternal Bond with a Lawyer,” an older-brother figure appears to help a man who grew up as an orphan and became a thief. The original article asked, “Will he be able to find a household to continue his life so that another ‘human family’ can make a fresh start?” The lawyer who comes to claim him explains his sympathy by saying he had lost his own younger brother during the war.

Fourth, some stories departed from the simple “snapshot” or “headshot” format to represent the subject, which was the de facto model for identifying the individual [Figure 43]. The fifth, sixth and seventh stories in the series deliberately problematized this method of representation: a headshot of a woman who attempted suicide for being unjustly terminated by

her employer was pasted over part of her handwritten suicide note[78]; a day later, a Chinese-born man's photo was placed over his South Korean naturalization papers[79]; then in the seventh story, the pictorial representation of the subject disappeared entirely, showing only the legal papers of a woman who nearly lost custody of her daughter over her "immoral conduct."

Figure 43. From "The Human Family": (from left to right) Headshot of the subject pasted over her suicide note detailing her grievances; A Chinese-born man's photo over his South Korean naturalization papers; Legal papers of a subject who nearly loses custody of her daughter over alleged immoral behavior; Photo of American woman and her half-Korean daughter over letter to mother-in-law in South Korea.

While Steichen's exhibition used photography as if it *spoke for itself*, these images called into question the photographic image as a self-guaranteeing medium with their image-text hybridity.

[78] "Resistance Through Death" is about Yu Kwihae who was wrongfully terminated by the café management when an officer had felt mistreated by her service. Yu attempted suicide after writing a will explaining what had happened. In response to the article, 522 letters poured in from Seoul and 30 from Kangwon-do, and some 500 more from the rest of the country. Eighty percent of the letters were from office workers (both male and female), while romance letters made up the remaining twenty percent. One excerpt from a woman office-worker states, "Holding the newspaper in my hands, I felt a rush of heat to my eyes," confessing that she too grew up as an orphan and that "no matter how young your heart may be, you can speak the bitterness of being without parents." Also quoted is a "marriage request form," sent by a male reader who stipulates that if her "integrity" had been compromised beyond what was described in the paper, his proposal should be deemed as nullified and also that she must give up her life as a worker. Once she recovers, Yu announces her wish to find work again. As for the question of marriage, she declines to answer, though she says she is not ruling it out.

[79] The final article of the series was about a Chinese family who becomes naturalized as Korean-citizens. The article stands out because while it provides an epic sweep of a successful patriarch's life from his origins in China, the general tone is a positive one which ends in unequivocal material success. In the original article, the family is described as "a family whose ancestors and national territory differed from ours" who became naturalized because they wanted to become a part of our nation. Mr. Son entered Korea in 1926 when he was sixteen. When he was twenty four, he returned to China, got married and brought his wife and mother back to Korea. He made money during the liberation period doing trade and made tens of million hwan. In 1955, he decided to become Korean and had his entire family of six become naturalized as Koreans. His mother is 79, wife is 56, oldest son is 19 (attending school in Taiwan) and oldest girl is 17 also in Taiwan and 13 year old son is going to a Hwagyo school in Myongdong. They are all preparing to enter Korean universities. "It's their call in the end, but it would be normal for them to marry Koreans when they get older." He is said to love *makgŏlli*, *kimchi*, *kkagdugi*, *koch'ujang*. He receives a hundred letters. Some seek him out in person, looking for money and employment. The article states that he is funding the education of a young Korean man to Seoul National University, and the student is reported to be doing well. He has promised to provide tuition, board and to financially support his future. The article states: "He is trying to fulfill his duty as part of the same nation (*minjok*)."

For example, by overlaying the headshot with an image of a handwritten will or naturalization papers, we are being shown how the discursive logic of legality or sentiment can shape the identity of these subjects.

Finally, it is important to note that "The Human Family" repeatedly focused on the plight of women and orphans who suffered from combination of ill health, legal troubles or economic hardship. (This gendered orientation of the series also distinguished it from *The Family of Man*, which had a more balanced distribution of the two genders.) Out of eighteen distinct cases of "The Human Family," only three foregrounded the trials of adult males, while eleven dealt with the suffering of women, young and old. Out of eleven stories about women, all but one involved some form of physical suffering and exploitation (e.g. attempted suicide, drug abuse, sex work). In six out of eleven stories which were about women who were in trouble with the law, the narrative was presented in a way to get readers to sympathize with how the women ended up committing their crimes—including the story of one woman, who was engaging in sex work to support her father. Orphans, widows, and young women without means served as ideal subjects of melodramatic appeal. They were living reminders that the standard of everyday life that was a tasteful blend of traditional values and modern urban comforts often visualized in South Korean magazine pictorials was not available to the majority.

Both *The Family of Man* and "The Human Family" were spectacles of intimacy designed to appeal to the notion of universal kinship, yet the technique by which they made this appeal differed. Steichen relied on a multitude of de-contextualized images and anonymous bodies to provide sensorial immediacy and multiethnic richness to the de-historicized abstraction of the "global family," while *Tonga Ilbo* merged photography and the melodramatic narratives. While *The Family of Man* privileged an isolated, individuated subject as idealized targets of its

curatorial design, "The Human Family" invoked a sentimental community based on proximity, reciprocity, and exchange. The subjects of the latter were not reified, alienated abstractions (in the form of anonymous bodies) but flesh-and-blood people with whom readers could potentially form a quasi-familial bond. And while melodramatic in rhetoric, "The Human Family" succeeded in evoking heightened emotions precisely by maintaining a kind of *moral realism* that complicated the existing regulatory codes of legality, family, race, and gender. The series functioned in opposition to the re-emerging visual logic of consumer-based mass spectatorship—such as cinema and large-scale exhibitions, which privileged the model of the isolated, distanced and anonymous observer—by following sentimental evocations with potential for communion.

Closing the Gap: Overseer/Observer, Spectacle/Spectator

In the beginning of the chapter, I introduced the ideological contradiction and necessary anxiety in the subject-position of the postwar enlightenment campaign's neo-colonial overseer. That anxiety stems from the gap between the locus of observation (where information or spectacle is encountered) and the position from which this encounter is observed by the overseer. For example, USIS photographs often contained the gap between the gaze of the overseer and the phenomenon of crowds gathered around materials distributed through USIS information campaigns. In the same vein, we see the gap in the photograph of Edward Steichen manipulating a figurine in a miniature of *The Family of Man* exhibit [Figure 44], with Steichen looming godlike over the scale model; despite this fantasy of control, there is a gap between what is imagined from above and what is actually experienced by the crowd of spectators below. This section will explore the ways in which these respective overseers attempted to close this gap.

Figure 44. Steichen and a scale model of the exhibit
Source: Edward Steichen Archive, Museum of Modern Art.

As revealed in "Visitors Reactions to the 'Family of Man' Exhibit" held Academy of Fine Arts in Munich (compiled by a German survey organization working under contract with the Research Staff of American Embassy's Office of Public Affairs),[80] one way of closing the gap between the overseer and the observer of the spectacle was to produce sociological data of the event. This 106-page document provides a quantitative breakdown of the demographic composition of audience and attendance (according to gender, education level, income, socio-economic status, age, family status, occupation, religion, national origin), the audience's appraisal of the exhibit (further broken down into responses to the text, the pictures, and other details), the comprehension of theme, and the perception of the Unite States's role behind the exhibit, based on two surveyed samples: The first group (298 people) were interviewed immediately after the exhibit and the second group (472 people) were visited two-to-three days after seeing the exhibit, between November 19 and December 18, 1955.

By and large, the study presents *The Family of Man* in Munich to have been an

[80] Research Staff, "Visitors' Reactions to the 'Family of Man' Exhibit" (Office of Public Affairs, Germany: American Embassy, 1956), accessed April 15, 2017 https://archive.org/details/visitorsreaction225unit

overwhelming success. The viewers used superlatives to describe their experiences ("superior," "excellent," "outstanding," "without precedent," "magnificent"). The surveyors observed, after comparing the two samples of viewers, that while "after the time lag, enthusiasm is slightly less,"[81] the understanding of "underlying idea *increases* with the passing of time" (emphasis in the original). By drawing from audience reactions that described the exhibit as "inspiring humanitarian feelings by presenting the unifying elements common to men and thus promoting friendship and peace among all nations and races,"[82] they decide they are "justified in concluding that the pictorial approach of presenting the theme was highly successful."[83]

More interesting than the conclusion are the ways in which the survey company struggles to differentiate (in vain) between propaganda and non-propaganda. The report is conscious of the discrepancy between Steichen's motivation of the exhibit and USIS's own agenda; for example, while the former is said to be inspired by "no propaganda intention of any kind whatsoever, but with the sole message of the essential oneness of mankind throughout the world," which the survey company acknowledges in its "Introduction," the report goes on to declare in the same section,

> Of course, the ultimate success of the Steichen show can only be gauged by the extent to which it contributes to the achievements of USIS objectives here in Germany, through its *indirect approach*, the exhibit was especially exemplary and effective. It explained the exhibit's ideals successfully to the German public. Since the bulk of the audience attributed the ideals presented in the show to the U.S.A., it therefore created highly favorable attitudes towards the United States. The audience after seeing the show was found to be more convinced of the truthfulness of American ideals and efforts towards understanding and peace among peoples than before. (emphasis in the original)[84]

"Ultimate success," as the report states, has to be determined according to whether USIS's (rather than Steichen's) objectives have been fulfilled. The emphasis on "indirect approach"

[81] ii
[82] Ibid., ii.
[83] Ibid., ii
[84] Ibid., iii

shows how important it was that the campaign not be conceived of as mere propaganda. We see this, in fact, in the breakdown of respondent answers in terms of *correctly named objectives (ethical), partly correct objectives (informational)*, and *incorrectly named objective (propaganda)*.[85] The majority of respondents (71%) "correctly" identified the ethical message of global unity, mutual understanding, peace and friendship across racial and national divide, but a sizeable group (31%)[86] also focused on the "informational" content of the exhibition, such as the depiction of "human life" (21%). The privileging of the ethical objective over the informational objective betrays the propagandistic nature of the exhibit—while Steichen's avowed goal was to represent "a mirror of essential oneness of mankind," the ethical was privileged over the descriptive, because the former would shape behavior, attitudes, and action while the latter would simply offer up representation.[87] The exhibition had a message to convey, checked to see if it had conveyed it, and even tried to track the influence of the exhibition over a fixed time lag to assess a longer term effect of the event, and yet, the accusations of propaganda (one response read, "To carry propaganda for the United States") is labeled as "incorrectly named objective."[88] The systematic disavowal of the propagandistic motive even within its own procedural mechanism of verifying the efficacy of indoctrination testifies to the neo-colonial anxiety of the overseer.

While "Visitors' Reactions to the 'Family of Man' Exhibit" tries to reduce the multiplicity of visitor response into quantifiable data, Steichen tried to close the gap between the overseer (curator) and observer (spectator). In doing so, what is revealed is a second kind of gap,

[85] Ibid., 41.
[86] The total exceeds 100% because some respondents gave more than one answer.
[87] If there seems to be a conceptual slippage between the ethical and the descriptive, it is because the distinction itself is tendentious and forced.
[88] The report states, "Respondents were considered only partly right if in naming the objectives of the show they pointed to its informational nature, while those considered as absolutely wrong thought exclusively of propaganda objectives." Ibid., 41.

not just between the overseer and the subjects of control, but between the objects of the spectacle and the observer. Steichen's strategy addressed both gaps—between overseer/observer *and* spectacle/spectator. He did this by stepping out of his godlike position of the curator to enter the space as a photographer *among* the audience members, as we can infer from Steichen's collection of photographs of the exhibit-goers [Figure 45][89].

Figure 45. Steichen at the exhibition (left).
Source: Edward Steichen Archive, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

If the aforementioned USIS archival photographs were symptoms of an institutional and neo-colonial anxiety about the epistemic gap between the overseer and the observer, Steichen's collection of photographs may be understood as a more personalized investigatory tactic, to find evidence for or against whether his curatorial vision had been fulfilled. The MoMA archive of these meta-photographs reveals two striking tendencies [Figure 46]:

1) The blending of the faces and bodies of the exhibition-goers with the faces and bodies in the exhibition photographs and using the flattened depth-of-field to create the illusion that they exist in the same level of reality—*as a kind of family*, this time not across national, racial, or ethnic divide, but across the line of things and representations of things.

2) The tendency to crop close-up and close-together faces of exhibition-goers as they contemplate or react to the images before them.

[89] Edward Steichen Archive, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 46. Steichen's photographs of the exhibition. The top two photographs blend the faces and bodies of the exhibition-goers with the faces and bodies in the exhibition photographs, conflating two distinct levels of representation. The lower photographs are three (of several) examples that indicate Steichen's interest in affective intensity experienced by the visitors, conveyed by the means of compressed composition via cropping.
Source: Edward Steichen Archive, Museum of Modern Art, New York

As we have seen from Chapter 1, the technique of blending the distinction between thing and its representation (the first tendency) was employed by photographer Han Yŏngsu towards a different kind of message. For Han, the impetus was to problematize this blurring relationship, in which the foreign commoditized images (e.g. advertising iconography, portraits of Hollywood stars) were pouring into the streets of postwar Seoul. By contrast, Steichen's photographs functioned to foreground the resemblances and visual rhymes across the gap between things and the photographic representation of things, to showcase the ontological affinity between them. By situating himself as a spectator within the spectacle of his devising, Steichen was able to close the gap between the overseer and observer, and by rendering the spectators into subjects of

photography, he tries to dissolve away epistemic questions about the historical situatedness of the spectacular encounter: What do these individuals think of the photographs I have chosen for them? Do these photographs speak to their everyday experiences and feelings? Are they convinced of the universal humanity contained therein or are they seen as, simply, "pictures"?

The second tendency which privileged tightly framed compositions of faces reacting to the exhibition photographs brings us back to the earlier discussion of poet Chŏn Ponggŏn's response to Steichen's Seoul exhibit. While Chŏn complained about the bodies of exhibit-goers obstructing a clear line of sight, searching for an isolated, contained, and individuated form of experience, Steichen focused on these moments of inscrutable intensity, portraying observers (often multiple) situated within the communal experience of spectatorship. For Steichen, the impenetrability of these expressions may have posed unanswerable questions about the effects of photography. Perhaps the range of feelings conveyed in these photographs provided sufficient testimony to the affective force of *The Family of Man*. These photographs seem to dodge the question of beliefs, attitudes, or (ideological) positions, to capture human response to photography *in the throes of succumbing to affective shift*, to underscore both photography's ability to elicit such responses and photography's ability to capture them—that is to say, to highlight elements of affective economy mobilized by photography that cannot be reduced to the propagation of information or ethical norms, as privileged in "Visitors Reactions to the 'Family of Man' Exhibit."

What Steichen's transformation from curator (overseer) to spectator (observer) reveals is his concern over the gap of alienation between the spectacle and the spectator, the gap which he closes by producing a meta-photographic illusion in which that distance is (at least) temporarily suspended. This was also a common feature of "spectacles of intimacy" like "The Human

Family," as I discussed in the previous section. Through the eliciting of postwar affect, the deployment of melodramatic narrative, and the maintenance of moral realism, "The Human Family" was able to create a sense of immediacy. When the series ran its second cycle of stories, it also engaged in the technique of widening the frame of the spectacle to subsume the spectator within its diegetic field, to close the gap between spectator and the spectacle. This was achieved in "The Human Family" when a reader became an actor, which was often the case when *Tonga Ilbo* returned to the original subjects for a follow-up.

One particularly interesting example was the story, "Human Love That Transcends National Borders," about the aforementioned Sergeant Kennedy and his wife who was suffering from leprosy. In a follow-up article, it is revealed that a Korean lieutenant had translated the initial article in *Tonga Ilbo*, and showed the English-language version to the other soldiers and officers. "Everyone was overcome with emotion," the article states. "One black officer said, 'After reading this I've been thinking about the meaning of life for the last three hours. My heart is so heavy with emotion I don't know what to say,'" and requested that the translation be re-transcribed with a typewriter. Here, the officer's African-American identity may seem like an extraneous detail, but it allowed *Tonga Ilbo* to claim some cosmopolitan currency. While "The Human Family" may not have been able to travel across the world like *The Family of Man*, the narratives were moving enough to be translated and re-transcribed by non-Koreans who were won over by their sentimental appeal. The story, then, became a medium of interpersonal affect that moved through all the parties present. This self-reflexivity of a *Tonga Ilbo* (in which readers become participating subjects in the story) functioned as an incorporative framing device, which functioned as a portal into the world described in the newspaper. Those who were reading and circulating the *Tonga Ilbo* article had become the subjects of the second round of "The Human

Family." So not only were the people described in the story brought together through the original article's sentimental appeal, the readers of *Tonga Ilbo* were brought closer to the events in the human-interest story.

Conclusion

On February 25, 1958 in Ŭijŏngbu, Lieutenant James who had piloted a helicopter to deposit a crate of mechanical parts heard the sobbing of a child coming from inside one of the crates. Inside was a Korean boy named Kim Ch'unil, his face and neck painted with black tar. He was allegedly called a "black boy thief" and chased off. [90] Soon after the event, details emerged that in Pup'yŏng district (located in Incheon)—over twenty miles from where the boy was discovered by Lieutenant James—Kim had infiltrated the lodging of Eighth Army Aviation maintenance company in ASCOM City to steal supplies. Having been determined to be the culprit of more than twenty incidents of on-base thefts over the span of ten weeks, Kim was placed in a wooden cargo box and taken to a U.S. base via helicopter in Uijeongbu, as a form of punishment.[91] General George Decker, the commander-in-chief of the United Nations Command and commanding general of U.S. Forces, Korea and 8th U.S. Army, made a statement two days later, saying "the robust friendship of U.S. and South Korea is not compromised by this unfortunate incident" and declared that even if the boy had been guilty of theft, the treatment he received was "regretful."[92] ROK's Ministry of Foreign Affairs released the statement that Lieutenant James and other accomplices should be punished for their "inhumane" act of

[90] "Boy's Face Painted in 'Coal Tar' and Tossed Aside by Helicopter," *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun,* February 27, 1958. This account was contradicted later by Eighth Army's own investigation that stated that a Korean soldier first heard someone sobbing in the cargo box and enlisted the help of an American soldier to pry open the lid.
[91] "'[The Boy] Was Not Injured' 8th Army's Opinion Regarding the Boy Lynching Incident," *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun*, February 28, 1958.
[92] "'The Incident of Private Punishment Was Regretful,' Says General Decker," *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun*, February 28, 1958.

lynching.[93] Eventually, the soldiers involved in the incident were met with disciplinary measures in lieu of court martial.[94]

This was not an isolated incident.[95] Popular press of this period was riddled with news of such "extra-legal punishments." While the stories were reported in a detached, understated fashion, much different in tone from the plangent narratives of "The Human Family" discussed in this chapter, the universalist discourses inevitably intersected in the *Sasanggye* editorial in the February issue of 1960. In the article, editors spoke of two sex workers who were caught trespassing on the U.S. military base. As punishment, the women's heads were forcibly shaven. The editors protested that such punishment disregarded jurisdictional provisions made in Daejeon on July 12, 1950 (after the outbreak of the Korean War). The article states that "even if the culprits were prostitutes" a private punishment (*sajŏk chejae*) of shaving their heads might be considered a "violation of some fundamental rights of human beings." The editors cited the incident to urge the United States and South Korean government to establish a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in order to ensure the jurisdiction (*kwanhalgwŏn*) of Korean courts in such cases. The editors maintain that according to terms set by a letter exchanged between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Embassy when the ROK government was based in Daejeon, the U.S. military has no right to directly punish South Korean civilians. "Therefore," it is written, "even if a prostitute who invades the grounds of the U.S. military base, the U.S. military cannot apply U.S. law on Koreans nor can Koreans be subject to court martial."

[93] "Punish The Implicated U.S. Soldiers Immediately," *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun*, March 4, 1958.
[94] "Disciplinary Action Instead of Military Court," *Tonga Ilbo*, March 21, 1958.
[95] On March 8th near Kimpo Airport, an old man (63) was accosted by four U.S. soldiers for picking up a single board leaning against the camp fence and beaten for an hour, resulting in broken ribs, and serious injuries to face, chest, neck and abdomen. The event is explicitly linked to the "U.S. Army Boy Lynching Incident." See "Beating & Secret Burial by Three American Soldiers," *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun*, March 3, 1958.

The editors of *Sasanggye* twice deployed a provocative metaphor to describe the logic of this injustice; they claimed it was no different than the master of the house accusing a housekeeper of stealing, locking her up and as "a mode of private punishment" subjecting her to torture. This analogy was not merely incidental. In 1955 alone, more than a dozen cases of private punishment (*sahyŏng*) were covered in *Tonga Ilbo* and *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*, interest in the subject dipping momentarily in 1956 to rise again in 1957 and continuing steadily through 1960.[96] These incidents of *sahyŏng* were not limited to violence against servants and not all of the perpetrators were men. At times, torture was inflicted on someone within one's own family. Despite the sometimes fetishistic preoccupation with lurid detail, these stories went beyond being sensationalistic items of scandal, pointing to deeper political problems. The December 15th headline, for example, reads, "Human Rights Hit Rock Bottom," referring to how the crime occurred just days before the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Other stories of *sahyŏng* dealt explicitly with foreigner-on-Korean punishment, specifically acts of torture and humiliation perpetrated by U.S. soldiers, as seen in the case of Kim Ch'unil. In other words, ROK's fight to establish the judicial parameters of its sovereignty vis-à-vis the United States became a field of discourse that would appropriate these melodramatic figures as sacrificial subjects.

[96] The following represents a sampling of the 1955 cases: April 27th (*Tonga Ilbo*): A man (34) used knitting needles on toenails to privately punish a boy (5). May 11th (*Tonga Ilbo*): A female student (17) is accused of stealing. The male teacher (26) makes her swear to her innocence with her own blood by cutting her finger. May 21st (*Kyŏnghyang Sinmun*): A man (33) hangs his servant girl (11) upside down from the ceiling for being a bad cook, and beats her with an electric cord. June 18th (*Tonga Ilbo*): A man (43) frames his young female servant (15), ties her up and proceeds to torture her by pulling out her hair and burning her with a hot poker. July 1st (*Tonga Ilbo*): A stepmother (32) punishes daughter (22) of the former wife with needle and scissors, after locking her up in a cramped room without food. November 12th (*Kyŏnghyang Sinmun*): A housewife (32) accuses a servant girl (12) of stealing a watch, confined and tortured with fire tongs. December 13th (*Tonga Ilbo*): A woman (48) and her younger sister (43) confine their niece (14) in a room, cut her hair and burn her neck and legs with lit matches. December 15th (*Kyŏnghyang Sinmun*): A man (35) accuses a young woman (20) of stealing a skirt, drags her to a backroom kept her locked up for three hours and beats her.

What I have shown in my discussion of "The Human Family" in this chapter is that even prior to this appropriation, representations of these abject figures of postwar society were politically significant—in that it modeled a sentimental community based on proximity, reciprocity, and exchange, rather than merely rendering the subject as a target of public compassion. As a spectacle of intimacy, "The Human Family" functioned to make visible marginalized subjects of postwar society in South Korea and the conditions of division, inequity, and exploitation they suffered. In this way, "The Human Family" countered the visual rhetoric of *The Family of Man,* which insisted on the ideal of a global family by dissolving away borders of race, nation, gender, class and geopolitical conditions of division and hierarchy. (Indeed, the terrain of everyday life in postwar South Korea was anything but borderless.) What "The Human Family" ironically brought to light was that after the Korean War, the very idea of the Korean family (along with entrenched traditional patriarchal order) was undergoing a structural crisis as a result of familial separation, wartime casualties, and widespread poverty.

For South Korean photographers, there was nothing fundamentally problematic about the universalist rhetoric of *The Family of Man*. The exhibition served as an opportunity to shore up the legitimacy of their artistic endeavors, to endow their field of aesthetic labor with cosmopolitan prestige. For writers, critics, and poets, they were involved in re-scripting the meaning of Steichen's images, at times even destabilizing their claim to universality in the process. In the case of writers like Ch'u Sik and Yi Muyŏng, we see a more complicated approach to the idea of humanistic enlightenment embodied in *The Family of Man*. Ch'u Sik's "Discharged from Humanity" explicitly questions the avowed notion of humankind as a global family and indirectly fashions an alternative, localized source of mediated postwar enlightenment via the old man with the *yojigyŏng*. Yi Muyŏng's "Heretic" and "Portrait of Madness" presents a

deeply cynical view of the postwar subject besieged by spectacles of mass visuality, which is linked to apocalyptic destruction mobilized from a morally dubious position.

Also emphasized in this chapter was the importance of a particular form of spectatorship for the mobilization of neo-colonial visuality, which privileged and invoked an isolated, individuated, and alienated observer under the sway of enlightenment and consumerist logics. This structure of postwar enlightenment visuality produced necessary gaps between the epistemic position of the overseer and the observer as well as between the spectacle and the spectator. USIS attempted to close this experiential gap by resorting to sociological knowledge production, while Edward Steichen put on spectator drag to become one of the audience members on the exhibition floor. Through Steichen's photographs of exhibition visitors midst photographs, the observers became *like* the objects they were looking at, thereby erasing the anxious gap between the spectacle and the spectator. The pictures underscored the ontological affinity between people and their photographic representation, dissolving away questions of singularity, context, and historical situatedness—in other words, the potential for discrepancy and conflict between an idealized universal and the local reality. Steichen's photographs of visitors that emphasized expressions of affective excess that marked *shared* photographic encounters seemed to privilege moments of inscrutable intensity that would not be reducible to neatly categorizable beliefs, attitudes, and ideological positions that government agencies such as USIS would have preferred. That is to say, these photographs seemed to be an attempt to compensate for the atomizing and quantifying logics of postwar enlightenment visuality.

This chapter began by raising the question of universal "everydayness" as a globally circulating abstraction in the postwar period. The question of how to properly visualize this concept of universality marked a shift from the wartime campaign of promoting a distinctly

American way of life. While the global project of positioning American everyday life as a socio-economic standard to aspire to continued unabated in the postwar years, Steichen's approach to universal everydayness in *The Family of Man* emerged as a novel development. This chapter has considered both the questions of *what* and *how* regarding the deployment of this concept of "everydayness": at the level of content, what kinds of images were selected and circulated and what kind of textual explanations were produced across various sites in the process of re-framing and co-authoring the images; and at the level of technique, how the representations interacted with the observer, what kinds of spectatorial ideals were invoked in the curatorial design and by South Korean visitors, and the different ways in which Steichen and USIS imagined and attempted to investigate the experience of the exhibition visitors. What I hope to have shown in the process is that the *what* and the *how* are part of the same historical knot that I have been calling postwar enlightenment visuality. The content of the representation cannot be evaluated without paying attention to the neo-colonial informational infrastructure that will circulate it globally. The very idea of everydayness, once an attempt at visualization was made, relied on technological means of massification to maximize its worldwide exposure and currency (i.e. universality), which would further reify and alienate its representation.

When Ariella Azoulay recently observed that *The Family of Man* had pursued a "systematic distancing of sovereignty,"[97] she was analyzing the exhibit primarily at the level of content. Indeed, the images Steichen had chosen tended to de-emphasized the visual rhetoric of specific nations, religions, or national politics, to render these forms of identity as mere "components of a civil existence."[98] Yet Azoulay's hope that these photographs would contribute

[97] Ariella Azoulay, "The Family of Man: A Visual Declaration of Human Rights," in *The Human Snapshots*, eds. Thomas Keenan and Tirdad Zolgahdr, (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013), 43.
[98] Ibid., 44.

to restoring "conditions for being together in and for a common world"[99] already presupposes an imagined communal totality which exceeds the boundaries of one's sensorial horizons, the representation of which requires curation and the material basis for circuits of informational and sentimental exchange. It was this imagined communal totality that was the ambitious target of representation and circulation by USIS's "global information campaigns" and exhibits such as *The Family of Man*. The pressing need to be the organizing force behind this ostensibly humanitarian mediation finds breathless expression in the confessions of another mid-century American universalist Norman Cousins, who, much like Steichen, was stirred to launch into soaring rhetoric by the terror of nuclear destruction.

> All my life I had been a gradualist; in my thoughts on universalism and world government, I had been concerned primarily with the requirements of a world community organized under law and justice, and it had seemed self-evident that it might take several generations at least before such a community could be brought into being. But with Hiroshima, it became clear that a long-range ideal had become an immediate necessity, and that no amount of talk about the difficulties in the way of this universalism could dispose of the danger of trying to survive without it. The question was not whether we needed it, but only how we would have to go about getting it within the required time.[100]

Underlying this measured, self-righteous rhetoric is a shift from a profound respect for the procedures of law and justice to a brewing survivalist panic in the guise of moral necessity. The contradictions of postwar enlightenment visuality, then, were a direct consequence of this perceived necessity—necessity for a form of global governance that would attempt to intervene not only at the level of interstate relations, but at the level of everyday life, of the subject-formation process, and of the individuals' conception of themselves within the world.

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[99] Ibid., 44.
[100] Norman Cousins, "Confessions of a Universalist: One Man's Re-Education," *Saturday Review*, August 6, 1949, 80.

EPILOGUE

Beyond the 1950s: The Everyday as Permanent Crisis

> "…I've decided to look inside the living room of modern men and women. Lurking outside the window of modernity, we see that the customs of today's family of man is very different from those of our grandparents. How has so much changed? And what is the meaning of the time during which all of this change has transpired?"
>
> —Yi Ŏryŏng from Preface "History's Latecomers" in *The Modern Family of Man* (1971)[1]

If the terror of the nuclear age in the postwar period called for new forms of governmentality, the discourse of everyday life would play a crucial role in the waging of Cold War battles underway. For governmental and intergovernmental agencies such as USIS and UNESCO, this entailed a global and universalist discourse of audio-visual enlightenment, which would herald the revolutionary transformation of everyday life throughout the developing world. For the South Korean state, everyday life in the postwar-1950s was seen as a mode of incorporating the citizenry into a homogenized national spatio-temporality. "The New Life Movement," for example, attempted to shape the everyday lives of South Korean people across urban and rural space to encourage rationalization, thrift, and efficiency. As I have shown in this dissertation, analyses of these top-down attempts at subjectification and management can only yield a reductive and partial view, eliding the rich array of aesthetic, political, and ontological contestations and discursive strategies through which South Korean cultural actors were engaging explicitly with the postwar, post-colonial, and neo-colonial problematics of *saenghwal*. By using intermediality as a framework of analyzing everyday life, I have shown how reportage, photography, literature, criticism, cinema, philosophy, and the popular press were brought to

[1] Yi Ŏryŏng, *Hyŏndaeŭi In'gangajok* [the modern family of man] (Sŏul-si: Sŏmundang, 1971).

bear on the challenges of rethinking the significance of *saenghwal* in the postwar era, grappling with issues ranging from the ideological to the personal, the metaphysical to the sentimental, and the apocalyptic to the mundane.

As indicated in the dissertation's Introduction, the significance of the discourse of everyday life was not unique to the 1950s. Its emergence in East Asia was tied inextricably to the region's encounter with the conditions of modernity. Even after South Korea's troubled 1950s, the discourse of *saenghwal* would go on to shape and be shaped by the cultural, social, and geopolitical realities of the following decades. To touch on one example, not long after the collapse of Syngman Rhee's government in 1960, student demonstrators throughout Seoul (no doubt galvanized by their successful overthrow of Rhee's authoritarian regime) appropriated the slogan of "New Life." In the months that followed, these "enlightenment squads" (*kye'mongdae*) would raid high-end restaurants and cabaret halls, calling on fellow citizens to reform their everyday lives. As one demonstrator shouted, "Politics isn't the only form of revolution! Stop smoking foreign cigarettes and eliminate Japanese musical performances! Let us revolutionize everyday life!"[2] The public response was mixed. Some businesses closed doors fearing harassment by students. Customers who had cigarettes snatched out of their hands and mouths understandably expressed their displeasure. One commentator defended the students, claiming that "The New Life Movement" was the popular will (*minŭi*, 民意) that could stand up against those "second-class entities" feeding on the blood of the people (*minjung*, 民衆): "This 'new life' (*shinsaenghwal*) is the only way out for this nation and its people. Its significance exceeds that of the April Revolution."[3] The period following Syngman Rhee's fall saw increased political participation by students and labor unions, political liberalization, and the efflorescence of free

[2] "Haksaeng shinsaenghwal kye'mongdae haengdong kaesshi," *Tonga Ilbo*, July 12, 1960.
[3] "Shingsaenghwal undongŭi minŭi," *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*, July 17, 1960.

press. Yet the South Korean economy remained in its languishing, unstable state, and anxiety over the future of the nation persisted. When General Park Chung Hee successfully executed a military coup—later called "The May 16 Revolution"—the Chang Myŏn administration's Second Republic (1960-1961) came to end.

As is well known, under Park Chung Hee's rule, South Korea went on to achieve astounding economic growth—a phenomenon still commonly referred to as "The Miracle on Han River."[4] The question of Park's historical legacy and his contribution to South Korean society is a point of heated controversy,[5] and I would be remiss to attempt a nuanced, multi-faceted rendering of his role in these closing pages. It suffices to say that his top-down, state-guided, export-oriented model for industrialization and development played a major role in spurring rapid economic advancement. Within the realm of culture and society, the 1960s and 1970s saw increased urbanization, large-scale industrialization, and mass migration to the city from the countryside. The rise in literacy rates and enrollment in higher education, steady economic growth, and a solidifying professional middle-class meant social formations and patterns of life became quite distinct from what we have observed in the 1950s.

With an expanding base of readership came demands for different types of publications. In their interdisciplinary exploration of the 1960s, Kwon Podurae and Ch'ŏn Chŏnghwan argue that the 1960s was a pivotal period in the development of a "modern reading culture" in South

[4] Kim Hyung-A and Clark W. Sorensen, *Reassessing the Park Chung Hee Era, 1961-1979* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2011), 3.
[5] Byung-Kook Kim articulates them as follows: "How much was the economic takeoff fueled by changes in the political and social fabric? To what degree was Park Chung Hee personally responsible for the transformation—both political and economic—across multiple sectors? Why did South Korea's political regime drift toward "hard" authoritarianism while its economy modernized at a hyper pace? Were these changes causally related? Why was his era marked by both dazzling policy successes and spectacular failures? How much were South Korea's successes and failures explained by its historically antecedent conditions?" See Byung-Kook Kim, "Introduction," in *Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 1.

Korea.[6] The question of *Bildung* (German for cultivation, formation, or development) which they take to be part-and-parcel of modern subjectivity emerged with the collapse of feudal and ascriptively organized status structures, driving the proliferation of publications purporting to answer the question of how to conduct oneself in life for worldly success. While the discourse appeared as early as the 1920s during the Japanese occupation, it did not achieve mass-circulation until the U.S.-dominant postwar era, where the discourse of democracy and individual freedom began circulating alongside the European discourse of existentialism and the authentic self. Kwon and Ch'ŏn organize these expressions of self-management under the rubric of "technology of the self" [Figure 47].

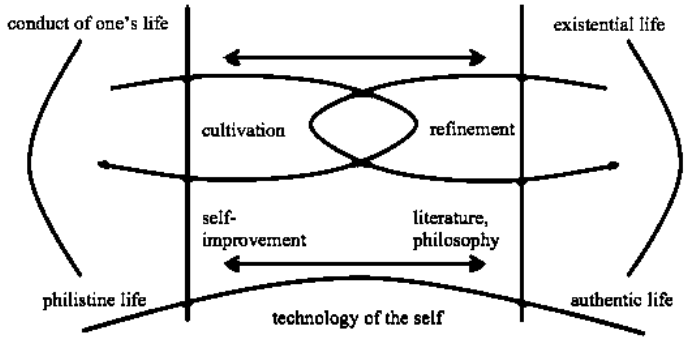

Figure 47. Kwon & Ch'ŏn's chart on the technology of the self and self-improvement
Source: Kwon Podurae and Ch'ŏn Chŏnghwan, *1960nyŏnŭl mutta*, (Sŏul-si: ch'ŏnnyŏnŭi sangsang, 2012), 385.

As Foucault argues, the deployment of writing in Seneca's letters (which detail his "network of obligations") and Marcus Aurelius's account of his own daily life fulfills self-administrative functions.[7] They produce selves, which through the act of writing and reading about one's thoughts, attempt the management of the soul. In Kwon and Ch'ŏn's formulation, the hierarchical relationship between "intellectual" and "popular" discourse on life and *saenghwal* is

[6] Kwŏn Podurae and Ch'ŏn Chŏnghwan, *1960nyŏnŭl mutta* [interrogating the 1960s] (Sŏul-si: Ch'ŏnnyŏnŭi sangsang, 2012), 375.
[7] Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: a Seminar with Michel Foucault*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 225.

reworked to frame them as two sides of the same coin: as discursive strategies for coping with alienation and struggle for advancement in a modern mass society. (Above, we can see a Venn diagram where discourses of "cultivation" and "refinement" overlap.)

Critic Yi Ŏryŏng serves as a good example of a writer who managed to walk a tightrope between intellectual and popular discourse with respect to the subject of self-cultivation/refinement during this period. Yi had made a name for himself in the immediate postwar years for his bold (often *ad hominem*) attacks against established figures in the literary world such as Kim Tongni, Yi Muyŏng, and Ch'oe Ilsu. (He also lumped writers Hwang Sunwŏn, Yŏm Sangsŏp, Sŏ Chŏngju, and Cho Yŏnhyŏn together, calling them "the modern men of Silla Dynasty."[8]) In the mid-1960s, Yi's essays became remarkably popular; indeed, one of his publishers credit him for creating a "boom in essay collections." His book *In the Soil, In the Wind* sold out its first print run of 2,000 copies in five days. Within the year, tens of thousands of copies had been sold. In the same decade, his popularity led to the publication of *Yi Ŏryŏng Essay Omnibus* and *Collected Works of Yi Ŏryŏng*. Recognized as works of a public intellectual who also represented the South Korean literary establishment, his essays were translated for publication in Japan, China, and the United States.[9]

In 1971, Yi published *The Modern Family of Man*, a self-described collection of "photo-essays" [Figure 48], which combined many of his already published essays with photographs from around the world, including England, Germany, Italy, Thailand, France, Norway, Australia, the United States, Argentina, India, and South Korea. Like Edward Steichen, he seemed to draw from photography's universalist potential, by matching the de-contextualized photographs with short reflections, using the image-text combination to both universalize his remarks and weave a

[8]Yi Pyŏngju, *Sangsangnyŏgŭi kŏmijul: iŏryŏng munhagŭi kilch'atki* (Sŏul-si: Saenggakŭi namu, 2001), 151.
[9] Kwŏn and Ch'ŏn, *1960nyŏnŭl mutta*., 303.

cosmopolitan citational network. The captions were mostly written by Yi himself (though the first section of the book included excerpts from Robert Browning, Herman Hesse, Jean Cocteau, Georg Trakl, among other world-renown writers.) In contrast to Steichen's *The Family of Man*, the reflections were more self-consciously philosophical ruminations rather than mythic aphorisms; rather than making claims about humankind as a *transhistorical* idea, Yi's *The Modern Family of Man* placed greater emphasis on the term "modern"—that is to say, it sought to investigate the significance of being a human being in the modern era.

Figure 48. From the inside cover of The Modern Family of Man
Source: Yi Ŏryŏng, *The Modern Family of Man*, (Sŏul-si: Sŏ'mundang, 1971)

The question of temporality loomed large in the book, which was part of a five-volume series, title "What Time Is It Now?"[10] The preface (partially quoted in the epigraph of this section), titled "History's Latecomers," begins with a childhood recollection Yi has of waking up late on winter morning and arriving late to the schoolyard. Unable to enter, he could only watch through the gates shivering, while his schoolmates did their morning calisthenics. His description of the sense of unease that came with being "left out of the procession" is strikingly reminiscent of Ch'u Sik's protagonist in "Discharged from Humanity" discussed in Chapter 5. While the procession in Ch'u Sik's story is humanity, for Yi, it is modernity itself. As the book will go on

[10] The titles for the five-volumes were 1) The Modern Family of Man, 2) This is Where Civilization's Sadness Lies, 3) The Gap Between Yesterday and Today, 4) South Korea's 25th Hour, and 5) Mountains and Streams.

to show, however, Yi, or Korea for that matter, has not been left out of modernity. They are merely "latecomers," and this outsider-status allows Yi (and his fellow Korean readers) to "look in" while "lurking outside the window of modernity" to see how modern men and women live. Only then, Yi says, can we know how to "put up the fencing to one's household" in the rapidly changing modern civilization. The book is, then, an invitation to evaluate the conditions of modernity and make the interior adjustments of an authentic self. The boundary of domesticity doubles as the figurative boundary between the spiritual self and the modern world, which the book will help negotiate. The content of Yi's book explores the nature of time, womanhood, manhood, childhood, old age in the modern era; while these themes appear to be universalist in the Steichenian sense, the book also included reflections on fashion, diet, leisure, and consumption. These period-specific ruminations situate Yi's essays as populist works of cultural criticism. The volume even hits a journalistic register with its colorful fold-out on The Woodstock Festival of 1969, which serves as a thematic transition from childhood to youth culture.

Three chapters of the book—"Children Robbed of Empty Lots," "The Era of Competing for Leisure," and "The Market, That Magic Hill"—are particularly striking for their connections to our earlier discussion of the postwar everyday. In "Children Robbed of Empty Lots," Yi laments how the nation's fixation on construction and development has taken empty lots or clearings from children. In the section, "Ideology of the Playground," Yi writes that children of the postwar era may have been happier because they did not have to live in the industrial-era amongst factories shooting plumes of smoke from their chimneys. The empty lots or ruins existed as a space of pure possibility of the "blank margin" (*yŏbaek*). He remembers the bombed out cityscape as conducive for exploration, mischief, freedom, and play. The nostalgic figure of

the postwar child, in this case, becomes a trope for an idealized stage of humanity, a state of innocence prior to being colonized by capitalist everyday life, which demands rationality, utility, productivity, and efficiency. Through the figure of the postwar child, Yi laments how human beings have lost the meaningfulness of action divorced from their practical outcome. This is what children excel at: appreciating the joy of action as an end in itself, rather than a means for some practical compensation (as in the case of labor).

If space has been colonized by the logic of construction, development, and growth, so has time itself. In "The Era of Competing for Leisure," Yi bemoans how the practice of leisure has become another form of a rat race. With an ironic touch, he employs the term "holiday frontlines," describing going on vacation as entering a kind of a battlefield. "The war is over, but there is no peace. The family's entire *saenghwal* must be re-organized for the holiday frontlines."[11] The "competition for survival" (*saengjon kyŏngjaeng*) has turned into "competition for play." In the American parlance, it is essentially the idea of "keeping up with the Joneses," whether it means your family rides on a motor boat, rents a beach parasol, or stays in a nice hotel. The children cry, "Give me ice cream, take me to pachinko, get me an inflatable tube, I'll take a Coke…no, Pepsi."[12] The culture of conspicuous consumption means that people are not free to enjoy their vacation time as unscheduled time. In Chapter 4's discussion of *Holiday in Seoul*, we saw how a sense of restlessness and ennui fell over characters with free time left unaccounted for. In the 1950s, these were agonies of luxury, limited to the privileged few with material means. By the early 1970s, the condition has become part-and-parcel of mass culture.

Yi follows his lamentation on modern people's inability to "truly" enjoy their free time by calling for a time apart from "the consumerist everyday." He draws inspiration from two very

[11] Yi Ŏryŏng, *Hyŏndaeŭi In'gangajok* [the modern family of man] (Sŏul-si: Sŏmundang, 1971), 266.
[12] Ibid., 267.

different texts: a *san'yuga* (山遊歌) from the Chosŏn Dynasty and a reading of Albert Camus's *The Myth of the Sisyphus*. For Yi, the original nature of leisure is searching for "the true, innermost creativity" that exists beyond the realm of wealth, riches, and other worldly recognition—a principle captured in *han'yujajŏk* (閑遊自適).

> Don't bother with the straw mat.
> The fallen leaves serve me fine.
> Don't light the knots of pine.
> Yesterday's moon will rise.
> Don't be shy and bring out
> Your humblest herbs and drink.[13]

In his reading of *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Yi focuses on the period after Sisyphus has pushed the boulder up the hill. It is during the walk down the hill (before he has to push the boulder back up again) that Sisyphus can find the time for discovering and expressing his true self. On the other hand, if Sisyphus tries to hide from the absurdity of his fate, this period of rest becomes a time of "forgetting" (*manggak*) rather than a time of true freedom and self-discovery. For Yi, the culture of mass leisure achieves this forgetting primarily through practices of consumption.

The final chapter "The Market, That Magic Hill" is devoted to the subject of consumerism and the commodity fetish. In the section full of photographic images preceding the essay component, Yu Kyŏngja's photographs of Koreans at department stores are juxtaposed with captions that describe the intoxicating call of the commodity form [Figure 49]: "Buy me! Take me!" Yu's photographs, especially of human beings around dolls and mannequins, are strikingly reminiscent of Han Yŏngsu's uncanny photographs from Chapter 1. Yi writes, "The modern person doesn't buy commodities because they're needed; they buy because they've been bewitched." He focuses on the commodity's effect on the eye, which becomes "possessed," "sleepy," and "dreamy," and try to grab at the commodity form. Going to a department store or

[13] Ibid., 273

the supermarket, "even a hundred-year old nine-tailed fox (*kumiho*, 九尾狐) would be "dazed by what he sees, and lose his wits…he would fall into a state of hypnosis." He describes consumerism as no less than "the modern person's disease." We see that with further entrenchment of mass-consumer society, the deep ambivalence towards the commodity form witnessed in the postwar fiction of Pak Yonggu, Kim Kwangsik, Nam Chŏnghyon, and Ha Kŭnch'an has only intensified, animated by the familiar tropes of confusion and bedazzlement.

Figure 49. "Buy me! Take me!"
Source: Yi Ŏryŏng, *The Modern Family of Man*, (Sŏul-si: Sŏ'mundang, 1971), 280, 278.

Yi's curation of pictorials conclude on another familiar note—the marketplace (*changt'ŏ*)—where workers gather to sell produce, fruits, and fish [Figure 50]. He is hoping to counterbalance the intoxication and fatigue brought on by consumerist spectacles with a more wholesome site of sociality and exchange, where the *minjung* (民衆) labor to earn their keep.

> There in the market we unwrap our day's *saenghwal*. The market scene continues everyday without exception, but yesterday, and today, and tomorrow can never be the same; each is changed, with new meaning. Early in the morning, the day's *saenghwal* begins, and at sunset when stars appear, we pack up our *saenghwal* and return home to our place of rest.[14]

[14] Ibid., 285.

And later,

> When *saenghwal*'s malaise sets in, when you begin to doubt what it means to be living, go visit the marketplace. Is there anywhere else where the meaning of genuine life pulsates with such vitality? It is in the messy and cacophonous market where we learn the vibrant philosophy of life that even profoundest theories cannot teach.[15]

While these excerpts may be reminiscent of post-liberation streetscape-reportage discussed in the beginning of Chapter 1, there are important differences. While the photograph appears to provide an indexical and concrete tether to a social reality, the brevity of its caption—simply naming the photographer and the country where the photo was taken (the format of *The Family of Man*)—severs the link to a specific social-historical conjuncture which the image might capture. The photograph stands for "marketplace" in its reified form. Unlike Yi's curation of Chŏng Tosŏn's photographs, which eschews the realist-documentary ethos to emphasize the poetic-symbolic valence of the image, the streetscape-reportage of the post-liberation period attempted to imagine a historical future by remaining grounded in South Korea's post-colonial semi-sovereign urban geography. The path of the flâneur, the names of streets and neighborhoods (and their interconnectedness), were documented and circulated to weave a shared space of reconstructive sociality, thereby inviting the reader to become a fellow observer and participant of history. By contrast, the photos in Yi's book abstract the *idea* of a marketplace from the singularity of the moment. When Yi writes, for example, "when *saenghwal*'s malaise sets in," he does not specify whose *saenghwal* is being discussed. Furthermore, the marketplace as a site of "vitality" (*saengdong*, 生動) reminds us of the language of Paek Ch'ŏl near the end of this dissertation's Introduction, where he called upon the postwar generation to look beneath "the illusory realm" of corruption, poverty, and negativity for the seed of "new life" (*shinsaeng*, 新生). While Paek's call was for the vital awakening of a world-historical subjectivity to meet the challenges of the

[15] Ibid., 288.

Cold War-era, Yi deploys "vitality" towards more private and interiorized ends, as a personal means of refuge, refinement, and regeneration within mass-consumerist everyday life.

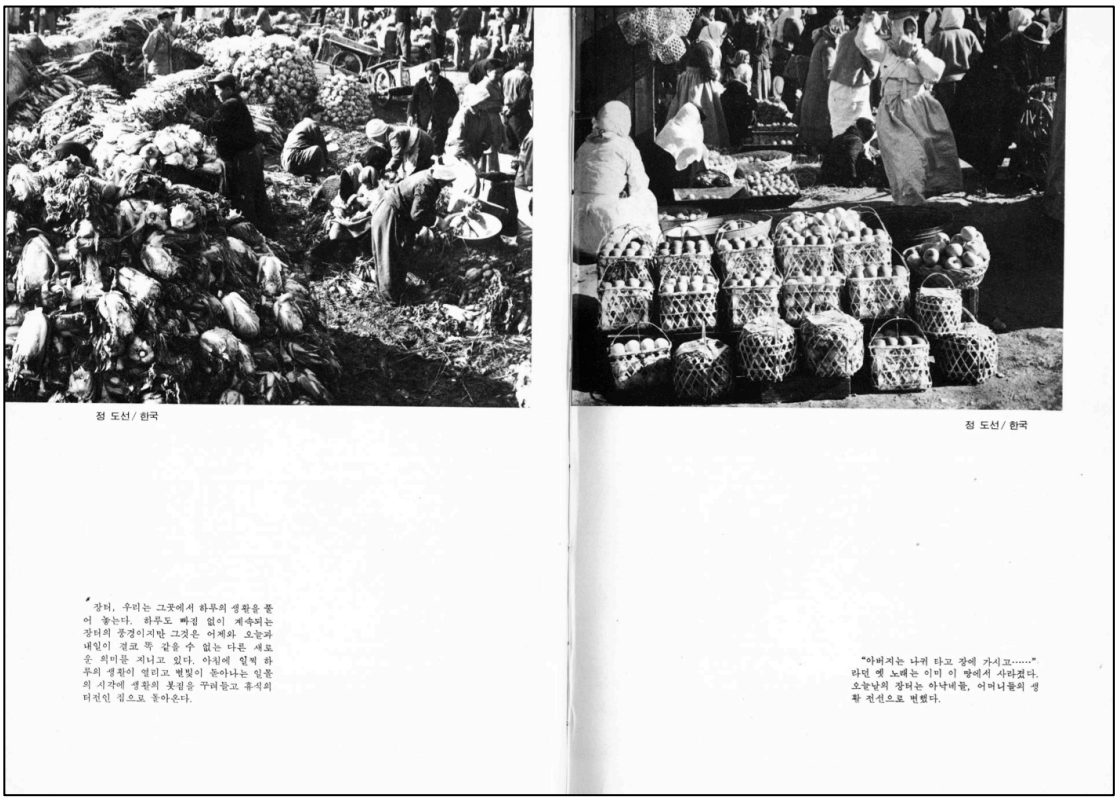

Figure 50. The Marketplace
Source: Yi Ŏryŏng, *The Modern Family of Man*, (Sŏul-si: Sŏ'mundang, 1971), 284-285.

While Yi's reification of the "marketplace" as a sentimentalized idea rather than a site of historical negotiation may seem to have held the figures depicted in the photographs "captive," the subjectivity of the working-class would find new channels of articulation and expression in the decades to come. Novelists such as Hwang Sŏkyŏng and Yi Mun'gu, for example, would focus on the lives of marginalized factory workers living in shantytowns or the struggles of rural folks left behind by Park Chung Hee's developmentalist policies,[16] while activists of the 1970s and 1980s would re-appropriate traditional forms of ritual and dance to produce a politically-

[16] See Youngju Ryu, *Writers of the Winter Republic: Literature and Resistance in Park Chung Hee's Era* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015).

engaged avant-garde performance-art called *madanggŭk*.[17] Just as the geopolitical realignment of the post-liberation years and the Korean War mobilized novel configurations of media as both forms of governmentality and emancipatory techniques (expressed through fugitive forms of spatio-temporality or vernacular visions of utopic futures), the tumultuous years of rapid urbanization and industrialization would produce new privileged sites for mapping and re-making the violence and vitality of history as witnessed and felt in everyday life.

[17] See Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

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